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GREENLAND AND MINNESOTA

BY

WILLIAM THALBITZER

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By WILLIAM THALBITZER

Copenhagen, Denmark

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* This paper, by a distinguished Danish authority, is published by the Smithsonian Institution as an interesting contribution to a discussion of a subject that, so far as it relates to the Kensington stone, has aroused much controversy.—EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION

nýsta ek niðr,
nam ek upp rúnar
œpande nam;
fell ek aprt þaðan.
(*From Hvamöl.*)

Of the two most interesting and puzzling runic stones known to me, one is from the small island of Kingigtorsuaq, "towering mountain," situated among the skerries about 10 miles north of the colony of Upernavik in northern West Greenland, in latitude $72^{\circ}58'$ N., longitude $56^{\circ}14'$ W.; the other is from Minnesota near the village of Kensington, situated about latitude 47° N., longitude 96° W., west of the Great Lakes. Both stones tell of expeditions of discovery, one starting from the Norse settlements in Greenland and reaching far north, the other starting from Scandinavia and traveling by way of Greenland to Vinland, and from there west.

The first stone was found in 1824 by Pelimut (i.e., Philemon), a Greenlander, and the same year was sent to the museum at Copenhagen. It was very small, only 10 cm. in length. All runologists acknowledge the authenticity and old age of the inscription; it is estimated to date from about A.D. 1300.

The other stone, the American one from Minnesota, was dug up in 1898 by a Swedish farmer named Olof Ohman when grubbing trees on a hill, formerly an island, on his land. He found the stone clasped by two large roots of an aspen, where, to judge from the age of the tree, it had been buried for many years. It is a longish stone (78.7 by 40.6 by 15.2 cm.) weighing nearly 200 pounds. The inscription is long, one of the longest runic inscriptions known, and by a kind of "runic figures," i.e., pentathic numeral figures (used according to our Arabic numeral system), it dates itself in the year 1362. The 221 (222) large, clear runic signs are arranged in nine horizontal lines on the face and three vertical lines on the left edge of the stone. Geologists who have inspected the stone state that the runes bear the stamp of a very long period of weathering.

But in the contents of the inscription there were certain peculiarities that went contrary to this impression. Hence the authenticity of the inscription was seriously questioned by two American runologists, Prof. O. J. Breda, of the University of Minnesota, and Prof. G. O. Curme, of Evanston, Ill., who 50 years ago first saw the stone or photographs of it. The inscription appeared to contain English words such as *from*, *of*, *ded*, *illy*, and several other peculiarities such as

mans, "men," *rise*, "journey, voyage," etc., which seemed to them absolutely inexplicable on a runic stone. Certain statements made locally unfortunately led to suspicion being directed to a Swedish immigrant, a friend of the farmer who had found the stone. He was a schoolmaster wandering in certain parts of Minnesota, originally an unfrocked clergyman from the province of Södermanland, "who had perhaps half forgotten his mother tongue." He was even said to have possessed a Swedish textbook in which a runic alphabet was printed. The man had died a few years before the stone was found.

Since the first critical treatment, no thorough philological investigation has been made to this day, perhaps with one exception, which will be mentioned presently. It is true that the stone was sent to exhibitions in France and Norway, where it occasioned animated discussions in the newspapers; but the real experts of Scandinavia one and all brushed aside the view that the stone could be genuine. This was in the years immediately after 1908, when the Norwegian-American Hjalmar R. Holand, living in Wisconsin, had obtained the stone from Ohman and taken up the study of runes and related subjects. He first wrote about the find in *Skandinaven* (January 17, 1908), one of the leading newspapers of Minnesota. He was of the opinion that the philologists had judged the inscription on erroneous supposition that it belonged to the old Vinland period and was written in Old Icelandic. That it was found hidden in the earth so far from the Atlantic coast was a further reason for rejection. The last point was, indeed, difficult to account for. But Holand was able to offer a surprising explanation, which justified both the year 1362 and the remote place of discovery (see p. 16 f.). It seems, however, that the verdict by the professors that the stone was a "clumsy fraud" had made an indelible impression. The weighty scientific condemnation and the distortion of the facts in the papers were like a dead weight on the proper investigation of the problem. Charges of that kind are hard to silence.

The suspicious stone was first placed in a bank in Alexandria, Minn., where it remained for a number of years, still tabooed by the runologists; but in 1948 it was moved to the United States National Museum under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D. C. Meanwhile the indefatigable Holand had continued his private studies on Scandinavian runes, medieval dialects, and Scandinavian archeology, and in the course of 40 years he has

written three very thorough books on the Kensington stone and the Newport tower, besides some shorter articles.¹

For a long time I, too, had considered the Kensington stone a fraud, and the late Prof. Finnur Jónsson and other Scandinavian runologists confirmed my view. However, from time to time certain fresh facts bearing on the matter have come to light, in archeology, runology, and philology, especially Prof. Axel Kock's later studies on medieval Swedish dialects. As new light is gradually being thrown on this amazing find from the West, I cannot but waver in my doubt and am forced to see the question from a new viewpoint. Not only Holand's books but my own investigations as well have set me thinking along new lines.² I now maintain that this matter in its entirety is worthy of restudy; it seems to me that, after all, the inscription may be authentic.

I shall not dwell on the great number of discoveries of presumably medieval antiquities made near or in the general neighborhood of the locality where the Kensington stone was found, in Minnesota and elsewhere (described in Holand's books); this must be left to the archeologists. I shall keep to the inner linguistic and historical criteria of the inscription and try to state the evidence that seems to me to speak for its linguistic credibility. This, perhaps, will provide encouragement to others more competent than I to give their attention to the problem once again.

Acknowledgments.—I am greatly indebted to Gunnar Knudsen, M. A., editor of the *Danske Studier*, for many helpful comments during the preparation of the manuscript of my paper (in *Danske Studier*, 1946-47). During the preparation of the English translation and the appendix to the present work, I collaborated with Vilhelm Marstrand, Secretary to our new Academy of Technical Sciences, who, I found, possessed an intimate knowledge of everything written about the runes. He has himself examined a great many runic inscriptions and interpreted them in a very independent manner. He has given numeric magic particular attention. The results he put

¹ Holand, H. J. R., *The Kensington stone, a study in pre-Columbian American history*, pp. 75, 78 ff., 1932 (2d ed. 1940); *Westward from Vinland*, 1940; *America 1355-1364*, 1946.

² One competent observer who has not taken a hypercritical attitude like most other Scandinavian philologists is the late Prof. Hjalmar Lindroth, of Göteborg. In a letter to Prof. Richard Hennig (author of *Terrae Incognitae*, vols. 1 to 3, 1938), published in *Petermann's Geogr. Mitteil.*, pp. 89-90, 1938, Lindroth weighs the evidence pro and con in an unbiased manner, admitting that hitherto the investigations have been superficial. "The last word has not been spoken," writes Lindroth.

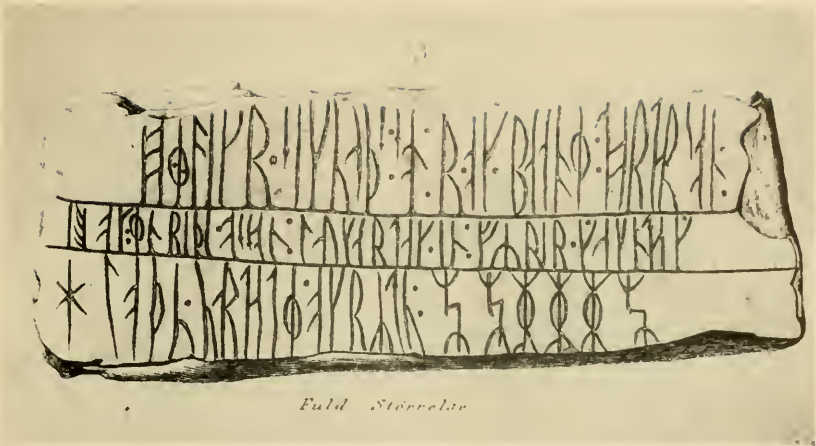


FIG. 1.—The Kingigtorsuaq stone from northwest Greenland. (From Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, pl. 9, København, 1845.)



FIG. 2.—The Kensington stone from Minnesota. Left, front view; right, side view. (From Hjalmar R. Holand, 1932, figs. 1-2.)

before me, a continuation of the studies of Magnus Olsen and others of numeric "magic" in runology (cf. p. 54 f.), impressed me so much that I could not disregard the possibility that the runes of the Kensington stone might present a similar secret numeric system. Mr. Marstrand, it is true, had at first been skeptical concerning this possibility. The precarious conditions under which this inscription was carved made it seem improbable that it should have been adapted to the usual system of numeric magic. However, on my suggestion he made a fresh investigation of the number of runes and points of the inscription, and arrived at a positive result. I wanted Mr. Marstrand's account to be included above his own signature in the appendix to this paper, but this did not prove feasible. If his theory is correct his result will present a cogent criterion of the genuineness of the inscription.

I. THE KINGIGTORSSUAQ STONE FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF UPERNAVIK, NORTHWEST GREENLAND

The Kingigtorsuaq stone is a blackish-gray or dark-green quartz slate, with a smooth surface for the inscription, found on stony ground beside a very old ruined cairn in which the stone was probably once placed. Close by, at the top of the same island, two somewhat smaller cairns are found, so that the three cairns form the corners of an equilateral triangle.

These cairns may have given the bearings of the permanent residence of the people who had erected them as being on another island or on the mainland. The same year it was found, the small runic stone—undoubtedly one of the smallest in the world, but at the same time the most significant of all runic inscriptions yet found in Greenland—was sent down to Copenhagen by W. A. Graah on his first voyage to Greenland (1823-24).

Rasmus Rask interpreted the inscription, and on November 2, 1824, wrote an account of it—brief, but for the time expert and penetrating—which was published by Prof. Finn Magnussen in the *Antiquariske Annaler*.³ Rask's interpretation has stood its ground, as it is repeated practically unaltered by the later interpreters of the inscription, Finnur Jónsson (1914) and Magnus Olsen (1932), except that they hesitate to accept the interpretation of the last words and the secret runes. (The last word is followed by six unusual and unexplained runic signs, probably some magic letters.)⁴

Nobody has ever doubted the authenticity of this runic inscription, although Finnur Jónsson has considered the possibility of its being of later origin because at the time of the discovery there was an Icelander in north Greenland who was for some time employed as manager at Godhavn on Disko Island and as such was accountant-

³ Rask, in the *Antiquariske Annaler*, vol. 4, pp. 309-342 and 367-378, 1827, quoted by Finn Magnussen, who also later wrote about the inscription in *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, vol. 3, p. 843, 1845. Cf. Rafn, in the *Antiquitates Americanae*, pp. 347-355, 1837, in both places with drawings of the stone (pls. 8 and 9). Cf. also Pingel, in *Nord. Tidsskr. f. Oldkyndighed*, vol. 1, p. 108, 1832, and Liljegen, *Run-lära*, p. 157, note, and p. 211, 1832.

⁴ Jónsson, Finnur, *Runestenen fra Kingigtorsuaq*, *Grønlandske Selskab Aarsskrift*, 1914 (cf. *ibid.*, 1916 and 1922). Olsen, Magnus, *Kingigtorssoakstenen og sproget i de grønlandske runeinnskrifter*, *Norsk Tidsskr. f. Sprogvidenskab*, vol. 5, 1932.

manager of Upernavik. This Iclander, however, did not get so far north until 1825, the year after the runic stone had been discovered. He was a member of the Royal Scandinavian Ancient Text Society (Det Kongelige Oldskrift Selskab). It may be added that the first missionary at Upernavik, sent there in 1779, was also an Iclander.⁵ The fact that the strange cairns there had long ago aroused attention among the Greenlanders and Danes in north Greenland appears from statements in Paul Egede's Greenlandic Journal (printed in 1780), about which I have written elsewhere.⁶

Rask's interpretation runs as follows:

Ellingr Sigvað sonr ok Bjanne Tórtarson
ok Endridi Osson laugarðaginn fyrir gangdag
hlóðu varða te . . . ok ruddu MCXXXV

Erling Sighvatsson and Bjarne Thordarson and Endrithi Oddson Saturday before "gangdag" raised the(se) cairns . . . and "rydu"

"I attach no importance at all to the explanation of the date of year," says Rask, and Finn Magnusen queries it.⁷

In Finnur Jónsson's rendering the inscription shows the following form and interpretation:

- (a) ellikr: sikvaðs: son: r. ok. baanne: tortarson:
(b) ok: enriði: osson: laukardak. in: fyrir. gakndag
(c) hloðu. uardate. okrydu: . . . (?) . . .

"Erlingr Sigvatssonr ok Bjarne Þórðarson ok Enriði Oddson laugardaginn fyrir gagndag (= gangdag) hlóðu varðu ðe . . . ok rydu? . . ."

And he renders it in Danish thus:

Erling Sigvatssön og Bjarne Tordsson og Enride Oddsön opførte lørdagen før gangdag denne (disse) varde(r) .og . . .

As appears from the inscription (fig. 1) there is an initial sign in the lines (a) and (b) that has not been considered in the interpretations of Rask, Finn Magnusen, and Finnur Jónsson, all having considered these "initial signs" as ornamental strokes without any meaning.

⁵ Egede, Paul, *Efterretninger om Grønland*, p. 249, 1788, and Jónsson, Finnur, loc. cit., p. 321.

⁶ Thalbitzer, W., *Nordboerne ved Upernavik, Grønlandske Selskab Aarsskrift*, 1945; Jónsson, Finnur, *Grønlandske runestenen*, *ibid.*, 1916.

⁷ *Antiquariske Annaler*, vol. 4, pp. 311 and 318, 1827. Notoriously the ancient knowledge of runic and numeral magic was quite lost in the days of F. Magnusen and R. Rask, and their interpretation of the secret signs ("runes") of this inscription is guesswork.

The first ones to search the old lore about these matters were the Swede F. Lällfer and the Norwegian M. Olsen. (Cf. pp. 9-10 and 55.)

Finnur Jónsson describes their forms and adds: "These signs are only ornaments without any literal meaning" (i.e., they are not letters).

The two first-mentioned interpreters termed them "initial ornaments." In the case of the final signs, the six secret runes in (c) (fig. 1; pp. 7 and 54 f.), both Rask and Finn Magnusen, although with some doubts, would read an indication of a year as if they were Latin letters (MCXXXV), an otherwise unknown phenomenon on our early rune stones. On the other hand, this feature, a date in connection with a communication, might very well be expected on a stone like this, which does not belong with the commonest kind of runic stones such as tombstones, but may rather be compared to the calendar statements, diplomas, and other dated documents of the time, where a year is generally given at the top, more rarely at the end.⁸ As this inscription, like most diplomas, states a day—the Saturday before "gangdag"—there would be reason to expect a year, too. Without this the dating would be rather absurd. Finn Magnusen gives his opinion as to the exact meaning of the statement of the day: According to the old calendars and other Catholic sources it refers to the 25th of April,⁹ a time of year when the sea between the skerries in northern Greenland is always frozen over. Thus any possibility for the three men wintering there to escape home in their vessel must have been excluded. They were obviously badly in need of help and eagerly awaiting the breaking up of the ice, which never takes place until the end of June or the beginning of July. The miserable men then must have erected the cairns, partly as signals to draw the attention of their countrymen in the south to their whereabouts and partly as an account of their expedition to be left behind if they were to perish. The cairn with the runic inscription on the small stone, then, was erected by the men as a possibly posthumous bit of information for those who missed them and perhaps would search for them.

Rask and Finn Magnusen were unable to offer any convincing interpretation of the concluding secret runes of the inscription. The interpretation of these as denoting a year was based on guesswork, although they tried to connect their conjectures with the information they thought it possible to adduce from ancient manuscripts and calendars. Finnur Jónsson gave up the interpretation of the mystical signs.

⁸ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, Kristiania, vol. 1, 1847, wherein No. 237 ends like this: "Septimo ydus Martii, anno domini M^oCCC^o XXXVJ^o" (i.e., March 9, 1336), and No. 252: "m^occc^o XXXqvarto idus Julii" (i.e., July 12, 1334).

⁹ Magnusen, Finn, in *Antiqvariske Annaler*, vol. 4, pp. 318-320, 1827.

But Magnus Olsen, the great Norwegian runologist of our day, undertakes to explain the signs as a disguise of a magical word that might fit into the preceding context.¹⁰ In his opinion these secret runes are intended to complete the meaning of the last runic words proper, *okrydu*, i.e., *ok ryddu*, which, having been written in haste, have a punctuation mark missing. Magnus Olsen reads this as *ok rýndu* "and runed," i.e., "and wrote runes"—with the same *y*-rune as in *fyrir*, "for," and with a substitution of *nd* for *t*, which has several analogies in runology (cf. also here *ellingr* for *ellikr*), and which seems to me a fine and ingenious reading. Then he interprets the secret runes as *vel* or *vit*, thus reading it all as "(and runed) well, or widely."

I am sorry that I must consider the latter part of this solution—his interpretation of the secret runes—improbable; it seems to me to be too artificial and the resulting word too insignificant, its meaning too unsatisfactory. In the first place one wonders why such an adverbial addition as the innocent little word "well" or "widely" should be expressed by magical runes. Further, Olsen's interpretation of the individual runes seems to be difficult and far-fetched and is surely not correct with reference to the last sign, which cannot be *l*.

There is a former interpretation by Fritz Löffler that seems more probable to me.¹¹ He, too, had studied the secret runes of the Kingigtorsuaq stone and points out (as also mentioned by Magnus Olsen) a striking correspondence of these with the secret runes on the Norum font from Bohuslän, a similarity that cannot be disregarded. He reads the secret runes of the Kingigtorsuaq stone as *is*, "ice," interpreting the preceding *rydu* (in agreement with Rask and Finn Magnusen) as *ruddu*, the whole thus reading: "they cleared away ice." In my opinion this would be an acceptable meaning, but it is linguistically unwarrantable to read *ruddu* when the stone actually had *rydu* (or *rytu*). I decidedly prefer Magnus Olsen's reading *rýndu*, which would give a better sense than that adduced above; for there would be a clear purpose in the suggestion that the men *rýndu*

¹⁰ Olsen, Magnus, Kingigtórsoak-stenen (etc.) in Norsk Tidsskr. f. Sprogvidenskap, vol. 5, Oslo, 1932.

Later, Olsen came to another conclusion. Cf. Appendix, p. 54.

¹¹ Löffler, Fritz, at the annual meeting of the Swedish Antiquarian Association, March 1906 (Fornvännen, Stockholm, 1906, p. 52). Cf. Olsen, Magnus, Norsk Tidsskr. f. Sprogvidenskap, vol. 5, pp. 194-198 and 200, 1932, and Nansen, Fridtjof, Nordpå i Tåkeheimen, p. 227, with reference to Svenska Dagbladet, March 14, 1906.

is(?), "runed (for) the ice," i.e., conjured it away with runes to make the water open so that they might escape in their icebound boat from the long involuntary winter stay and go south to the home settlements. Anyone who has traveled in that region and has been icebound, even on a summer's day, at the mouth of the large ice fjord north of Upernavik, will easily realize how hopeless the situation must have appeared to the three icebound men after their confinement during the long winter. In all directions the sea must still have been frozen up to the end of April, while it was light during most of the 24 hours of the day as in south Greenland in summer. The three men must have been longing for deliverance. Also the Eskimo knew the use of magic in making the ice break up and go away.

The Norsemen had the same custom as the Eskimos, namely, not to mention by its true name the object to which one applies the magic, or the animal one wants to catch at sea—a kind of name taboo. When hunting at sea the Eskimos use substitute or circumlocutory words to denote the game in order not to scare it away by betraying their own intentions. Thus also when the ice was to be attacked; they must not mention the word "ice" or spell the word with the ordinary runes. Here magic signs were called for to attack the hostile ice: *ok rýndu ís* (*ís* to be written with magic signs). Linguistically the last-mentioned form may be open to criticism, viz, someone might maintain that *rýnda* (from *rýna*, a verb derived from the stem of *rúnar*, "runic letters") is an intransitive verb; if so, it would be expected that *ís* would be put in the dative, *ísi*. But *rýna* (imperfect *rýndi*) was a rare word, and, after all, might it not be used in an intransitive sense? Otherwise, *rýna ísi*, or *eptir ísi*.

All interpreters consider the language of this inscription to be Icelandic or even (Magnus Olsen) Greenlandic-Icelandic, a proper Norsemen's language. Rasmus Rask only wrote that it "is pure and proper Icelandic, but written carelessly according to the pronunciation of an unlearned man." Rask rightly regarded most of the forms of the personal names as being in accordance with modern Icelandic pronunciation. He considers *ellikr* (of the inscription) to stand for Erlingr; *sikvaps* for Sigvats; *baanne* (*bjanne*) for Bjarne; *tórtarson* for Þórþarson; *enridi* for E(i)ndriði; *osson* for Oddson. Thus he constructs the old Icelandic forms on the basis of those of the stone, which really look quite modern. Ellingr, Osson, Bjanne "are very close to the modern Icelandic pronunciation."¹² He further writes that "*te* for *þe* are undoubtedly the initials of the word *þenna*," the

¹² Cf. also Finn Magnusen in *Antiqvariske Annaler*, vol. 4, pp. 314-316, 1827.

sense of the final line being: "erected this cairn" (etc.). Finnur Jónsson and Magnus Olsen accept without reservation Rask's reading of the three men's names but prefer to interpret *varda* (*varða*) as in the plural, since, as we know now, there were three cairns on the top of the same islet. Hence they read *þe* as *þessa*, "these (cairns)."

On the other hand, Magnus Olsen looks on the linguistic forms of the inscription and the rune carver's relation to the language somewhat differently from Rask. We now, with Olsen, feel that the inscription testifies to a thorough insight into the use of the runes; it must have been an extremely skilled rune master who carved it—in spite of a few peculiar slips or mistakes, such as the separation of *r* from the stem of *son:r*, the omission of the punctuation mark in *okrytu* (for *ok rytu*), and *t* for *d* in the last-mentioned word, but *t* for *þ* in *Sigvaþ*, *te* for *þe* in *tessa* (*þessa*), etc.

The runes, according to Magnus Olsen, belong to the late rune alphabet, "which made the correspondence with the Latin alphabet complete . . ." ^{12a}

And at the end of the same treatise he says (p. 230): "The Kingigtorsuaq inscription was written by a man with a considerable training, and it is imaginable that this training was acquired not only by carving of runes, but also by occupation with texts in the mother tongue written with Latin characters." So much here for Magnus Olsen's interpretation.

A feature that has not been pointed out by the interpreters of this inscription, but that seems important to me, is this: the rune carver mentions the three men in the third person, none of them as identical with himself.

^{12a} Norsk Tidsskr. f. Sprogvidenskap, vol. 5, p. 250. Here he continues as follows: "Unfortunately we have no criteria to decide in which settlement and in which milieu the man belonged who carved the runes on the Kingigtorsuaq stone. It would seem that he was a prominent man who not only distinguished himself by courage and enterprise, but also readily devoted himself to the spiritual pursuits to which he might have access under the restricted conditions in a remote and isolated country. It seems to me indubitable that he had his home in the East Settlement (Eystri-bygd), the southernmost settlement on the west coast of Greenland, and I should think that he belonged to or was in touch with the leading circles there. This agrees with the whole character of the inscription, its literary stamp and, further, the runic art with which the inscription was made from first to last. . . . But a written Greenlandic literature seems to be out of the question. Even in a runic inscription written so excellently as that on the Kingigtorsuaq stone, living speech greatly asserts itself."

A most remarkable feature is the first rune, which has been interpreted as an *e* (*ellikr-ellingr*), this *e* here having been made into a dotted rune, i.e., provided with two internal clearly separated dots, ϕ (see fig. 1), but not repeated later in the inscription. Might it not be possible that the expert, perhaps learned, rune carver by this means wanted to denote a special variant of *e*, perhaps *ö* or a diphthong *ey* or *öy*?¹³

Olsen makes much of the two dots, being of the opinion that the rune carver wanted in this way to characterize the initial letter as a "golden number" in the calendar. In the year 1333 the golden number of Easter Day belonged to the 4th of April; therefore the *gangdag* would be Sunday the 25th of April. The "Saturday before *gangdag*" then would correspond to the 24th of April. Magnus Olsen concludes that the cairn was built and the inscription made on April 24, 1333. If so, this is a "historic inscription." (Olsen, loc. cit., p. 226.)

Thus there would still be a year indicated on the stone, an extremely rare occurrence on a runic stone from a medieval period, the beginning of the fourteenth century. The rune carver obviously was not quite so illiterate as thought by Rask. Nor can it be denied that the historical experience and the accurate calendar date of the inscription almost certainly must presuppose the statement of a year. If it had been written on vellum, one might have expected the application of Latin monastic letters, which presumably were well known to the rune carver from annals and similar documents stating years. Indeed, this occurs here and there in late medieval script in Scandinavia, at any rate in annals, calendars, and diplomas.

But let us once more look at the silent initial signs of the first lines.¹⁴

The two initial secret runes or unknown "stave signs" $\mathfrak{H}, \mathfrak{I}$ apparently are comparable with Ogham, twig runes, nail script,¹⁵ etc.

¹³ A similar name is found in a Norwegian diploma. See Unger and Lange, *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, Kristiania, vol. 1, No. 163, p. 142, 1847; cf. facsimile No. 2, p. 4: *Ollingi-Ellingi*. An *Eylingr* perhaps might also be imagined in Greenland (a patronymic?).

¹⁴ The initial sign in line 1 resembles a corresponding one in a late Dalecarlian runic inscription; it is seen on a "food bowl made of curly-grained wood." Cf. Erixon, *Sigurd, Runeskrift från Dalarna*, Fataburen, p. 151, fig. 4, 1915. For that matter, it also resembles the old *h*-rune known from the Kallerup, Snoldelev, and Helnæs stones and might here be an archaically used sign (Brøndum-Nielsen, *Danske runeindskrifter*, *Nordisk Kultur*, vol. 6, p. 119, 1933).

¹⁵ Cf. Pedersen, Holger, in *Runernes oprindelse*, Aarb. Nord. Oldk. og Hist., 1923, pp. 80-81; Olsen, Magnus, *De norrøne runeindskrifter*, in *Runerne (runorna)*, *Nordisk Kultur*, vol. 6, pp. 102, 108, 157, 1933.

If these unknown signs with which this inscription is started are not mere ornament or fancy sample, might they not after all be hidden numeral figures? One might feel tempted to adjust them so as to agree with our decimal system and to be interpreted as 1314, but probably this would be too rash an interpretation—particularly in the face of Magnus Olsen's ingenious hypothesis, which perhaps after all is justifiable and which leads to a later decade. At any rate, it would be remarkable if there were not a vestige of a preposed A.D. (Anno Domini) or the word "year." But what liberties cannot a Greenlandic rune carver take when on a dangerous voyage of discovery to the "Ultima Thule"?

II. THE KENSINGTON STONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(The documents here mentioned will be found reproduced in the Appendix.)

Let us (with Holand) suppose that the rune carver was an expert on runes and literature, of Swedish stock, a member of Powell Knutsson's expedition starting from Sweden-Norway, which, according to a document¹⁶ dated at Bergen, Monday the 3d of November, 1354, was to leave Norway for Greenland by order of King Magnus Eriks-son (sometimes nicknamed Smek). At that time King Magnus still reigned over parts of Sweden and the whole of Norway; in 1355 his son Håkon took over the government of Norway.

Information on what happened on the expedition is very scarce. It no doubt started out, although probably not until the spring of 1356. The document "Koning Magni Befalingsbref Powell Knutsson paa Anarm Gifvet, at Sejle til Grønland," has been printed from a late copy among the diplomas in volume 3 of Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker (pp. 120-123, 1845), as the original does not exist. *Anarm* must be a mistake in copying for *Onarheim*. A distinguished man, formerly an official in the service of Duchess Ingeborg, in 1347-48 law-speaker of Gulathing, Powell Knutsson¹⁷ was appointed to be "commandant" of the *knorr* (a type of ship) to take the men to Greenland. He is commissioned to select among the King's body-guard the "housecarls or others" whose relations to the King are such that he can command them to take part in the expedition. Thus it is prominent Norwegian and Swedish men with their "retainers" who are mentioned, fit to take part in an expedition to Greenland. This is in keeping with King Magnus' previous missionary and commercial policy toward Russia, a policy that, however, had been rather unsuccessful and had impoverished him and the realm. But in 1346 the *knorr* (the royal "brig" or a ship of similar size) had returned with riches from the southernmost settlement of Greenland, the Eastern Settlement, an extremely fortunate event, as the realm was

¹⁶ The document reads: "Mandagen efter Simonis oc Judae Dag" (the Monday after —). As Simon's and Judas' Day (28th of October) in 1354 fell on a Tuesday, the document thus originated from the 3d of November.

¹⁷ Munch, P. A., *Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden*, first part, p. 429, Kristiania, 1862. Here the name is spelled "Paal Knutssøn."

in need of money. It was further known that the Skrælings (old Icelandic name for the Eskimos) had attacked the Norsemen from the north, as may be read in the Icelandic annals: "They are now in possession of the Western Settlement." Already in 1341 this settlement had been found deserted. (Cf. what is said in a much later document from Skalholt, that the people of Greenland in 1342 were apostates from "the true faith and the religion of the Christians and had turned to the people of America.")¹⁸ This was the reason why "the Christians began to abstain from the voyages to Greenland."

In other words, there is no small probability that most of the Norsemen of the Western Settlement after the first attack of the Skrælings, about 1341, preferred to emigrate to the other side of the sea, where they constantly had connections with Helluland, Markland, and Vinland.

King Magnus, in short, had in mind a kind of small-scale crusade to support the declining Christianity in Greenland, either to set it on its feet again or to support the emigrants wherever they might be.

This strange expedition from Scandinavia to Greenland is not frequently mentioned in the literature about the medieval voyages to Greenland and Vinland. Little is known about it, and it is not known to have been of any importance to the early history of Greenland. Only upon arriving at Greenland could Powell Knutsson learn where the apostates were to be found.¹⁹ However, no information on the return of the explorers is extant. The expedition was not profitable

¹⁸ Sixteenth-century copy of an earlier document, printed in Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, pp. 459-460 (cf. p. 887), 1845. The year 1347, given in the work mentioned above the passage on page 459, is a misprint; it should be 1342. The passage in question is found in Bishop Gisle Oddson's copy made before the year 1637 from an old document in the archives of the bishopric. (See the Latin rendering in the Appendix, p. 51.) Munch, P. A., *Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden*, first part, pp. 313-315, 1862.

¹⁹ Besides the above-mentioned pages in Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, refer to Munch, P. A., *Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden*, first part, pp. 633-634, 1862 (cf. pp. 413-415, 429). Storm, G., *Studier over Vinlandsreiserne*, pp. 73-74, 1888. Holand, H. J. R., *The Kensington stone: a study in pre-Columbian American history*, pp. 75, 78 ff., 1932, 1940; Westward from Vinland, 1940; *America 1355-1364*, 1946. Nørlund, P., *Nordbobygderne*, p. 128, 1934. Hennig, R., *Terrae Incognitae*, vol. 3, pp. 268-281. Thalbitzer, W., *Powell Knutssons rejse, en forsvunden færd til Grønland og Markland*, Grønlandske Selskab Aarsskrift, pp. 54-60, 1948.

On the Swedish King's politics and lack of money see also Munch, P. A., *op cit.*, pp. 599-603; Hildebrand, E., *Sveriges Historia*, vol. 2, *Medeltiden*, pp. 207, 214, 228-235, 250 ff., 1905; and Øverland, O. A., *Norges Historie*, vol. 3, pp. 814 and 816 ff., Kristiania, 1888.

to the king. Powell Knutsson is not mentioned in any known document after his departure in 1356.

Credit is due Hjalmar Holand for having pointed out the possibility of a connection between this early Scandinavian Greenland expedition and the runes of the Kensington stone. In this inscription in a Scandinavian language it seems that a lost expedition has

1. $\text{B: } \text{Y} \text{Ö} \text{†} \text{†} \text{R: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{: } \text{F} \text{F: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{R} \text{R} \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{B} \text{†:}$
8 göter ok 22 norrmen på
2. $\text{: } \text{†} \text{B} \text{†} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{X} \text{R} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{Y} \text{R} \text{†:}$
opþagelsefarp frá
3. $\text{Y} \text{†} \text{†} \text{X} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{Y: } \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{Y} \text{†:}$
winland of west wi
4. $\text{*} \text{X} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{†} \text{R: } \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{F: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{X} \text{R: } \text{†} \text{†:}$
hape läger wep 2 skjær en
5. $\text{†} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{†: } \text{R} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{R} \text{R: } \text{Y} \text{R} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†:}$
pagh rise norr frá penásten
6. $\text{Y} \text{†: } \text{Y} \text{X} \text{R: } \text{†} \text{†: } \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{*}: \text{X} \text{B} \text{†} \text{†} \text{R}$
wi war ok fiske en pagh ärtir
7. $\text{Y} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{Y: } \text{*} \text{†} \text{Y: } \text{Y} \text{X} \text{†: } \text{Y: } \text{Y} \text{X} \text{†: } \text{R} \text{Ö} \text{†} \text{†:}$
wi kom hem faru 10 man röpe
8. $\text{X} \text{Y: } \text{L} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{Y: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{A} \text{V} \text{M} \cdot$
af blop og þep AVM
9. $\text{Y} \text{R} \text{X} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{X} \text{Y: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†:}$
fræelse af illu (or illu)
10. $\text{*} \text{X} \text{R: } \text{Y: } \text{Y} \text{X} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{Y} \text{†: } \text{*} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{X} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†:}$
har 10 mans we hawet at se
11. $\text{X} \text{B} \text{†} \text{†} \text{R: } \text{Y} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{X} \text{Y} \text{†: } \text{R} \text{†} \text{†:}$
ärtir wore skif 14 pagh rise
12. $\text{Y} \text{R} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†: } \text{Ö} \text{*}: \text{X} \text{*} \text{R: } \text{†} \text{†} \text{†} \text{†:}$
fråmpenä öh år 1362

FIG. 3.—Transcription and translation of the Kensington inscription. (From Holand, 1932, p. 5.)

erected a monument to itself somewhere inland about "14 days' journey from the coast" nearly on the watershed between the sources of the Mississippi and the prairie rivers going north or northwest.

Powell Knutsson and his men, then, are supposed to have sailed first to Greenland on one or two ships at their disposal, from there southwest toward Vinland, and, as the people searched for were not found there, then "west," i.e., according to Holand (as Vinland was regarded as part of a large island), first north, back to the Hudson Strait, and then west through this along the coast of the supposed

large island (i.e., Labrador); from there either across Hudson Bay or along the coast, until a favorable point at a broad estuary was reached. Here then was a place where an armed group might go inland in smaller boats, while the ship (or ships) was left behind near the coast, guarded by a crew of 10 men.

The inscription records a sanguinary catastrophe and the dangerous position of the men left behind "on this island"; but the lake in which the island once was located later dried up; now there is only a hill.

The men mentioned, 8 Goths^{19a} and 22 Norwegians, at the time when the stone was erected, would have been away from their homelands in Scandinavia for six or seven years on a warlike expedition.

The inscription on the Kensington stone

As it probably is to be read
(with all its "errors")

As it ought to be, according to
the medieval (14th-century) Swedish
written language as it is known
to us²⁰

1. 8 : gōter : ok : 22 : norrmen :	8 gōtær ok 22 northmen pa
po :	
2. : opdagelsefarð : frå	*updagelseferdum fra
3. winland : of : west : wi	winlandi *of west. wi
4. hade : læger : weð : 2 skjar :	hafðum lægher weþ twem skiaerum en
en :	
5. dags : rise : norr : frå : þeno :	daghs *rese nor fra þessom steni.
sten :	
6. wi : war : ok : fiske : en : dagh :	wi warum ok fiska ^{ðum} en dagh. æptir
æptir :	
7. wi : kom : hem : fan : io : man	wi komum hem funnum io men rþða
rþðe	
8. af : bloð : og : deð : A V M :	af bloði ok dþða. A.V.M.
9. frælse : af : illy :	frælse af illu.
10. har : io : mans : we : hawet :	(wi ?)** hawum io men weþ hafinu
at : se :	at sea
11. æptir : wore : skip : 14 : dagh :	æptir warum skipum 14 dagh *resor
rise :	
12. fråm : þeno : þh : ahr : 1362 :	fra(m) þessi þ. ar A.D. MCCCCLXII

* Before unusual forms or words.

** or: *iak* (*hawer?*).

^{19a} Goths = Gōtar in Modern Swedish will here be used for the inhabitants of the Swedish provinces East- and West-Gōtaland and of the neighboring provinces to the south.

²⁰ Cf. Hildebrand, E., Svenska skriftprov (Andra häftet), 1900; Noreen, Ad., Altschwedisches Lesebuch, 1892-1894; Klemming, G. E., Svenska Medeltidens Rimkrönikor; and Swedish homilies from the Middle Ages: Medeltids-Postillor.

Translation

8 Goths (Swedes) and 22 Norwegians on exploration journey from Vinland westward. We had camp by two skerries one day's journey north from this stone. We were and fish(ed) one day. After we came home (we) found 10 (of our) men red with blood and dead. A.V.M. (Ave Virgo Maria) save (us) from evil.

(We) have 10 men by the sea to look after our ship(s) 14 days' journey from this island. Year 1362.

The inscription is easy to read; the runes are large and distinct. Most of them are unambiguous (cf. fig. 6). Ambiguous (uncertain) are the runes:

𐐃 = <i>o, å</i>	𐐇 = <i>g, gh</i>	𐐉 = <i>j or el (or le)</i>
𐐛 = <i>þ, ð or d</i>	𐐚 = <i>v, w (u)</i>	

We may believe that they reached the then unknown coasts of Hudson Bay although it was indeed little short of a miracle (cf. Jens Munk's voyage, 1619-1620). The possibility of the same ships being able to return home from there would be just as amazing. Probably this first Scandinavian "group of emigrants" never returned, but scattered and perished. On this question Holand has his own opinion.²¹ The return is not mentioned in any extant documents. Powell Knutsson and his men have disappeared in the mists of antiquity. The expedition seems to have been entirely forgotten in Scandinavia, like so many other things.

THE KENSINGTON RUNES AND THE NUMERAL SIGNS

One of the most surprising features that meets the eye in this inscription is the use of the old-fashioned runic numerals, "five-twig signs" known from antiquated calendars ("runestave," "primstave") and other documents, discussed in Worm's work dating from 1643 on the runes and the "golden figures" ("gyldental") and in later works written by Swedish experts.²² To find these numeral signs in a

²¹ Holand, Hj. R., *The Kensington stone: a study in pre-Columbian American history*, 1932 (2d ed., 1940). The author (with G. Storm) here seems to believe in the return of the ship in 1363 or 1364 (pp. 88-95) although with a great number of casualties, among them Powell Knutsson. Cf. *Westward from Vinland*, pp. 146 ff., 1940; *America 1355-1364*, p. 14 (note), 1946. But in a later chapter he follows up the fate of the group of the emigrated Norsemen in America and their supposed merging in the peculiar culture of the blond Mandan Indians, which appeared so remarkable to later explorers.

²² Worm, Ole, *Fasti Danici*, Hafnia (Copenhagen), 1643. Martin P: son Nilsson, N. Beckman, N. Lithberg, and N. Lid: *Tidsregning, Tidsräkningen, in Nordisk Kultur*, vol. 21, 1934. Tuneld, J., *in K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-samfundet i Lund*, vol. 18. Brate, E., *Sveriges runinskrifter*, pp. 95-102, 1922.

medieval runic inscription on stone is quite incredible and hitherto unheard of in the history of runology!

The question arises: how old is this custom? The very first line of the Kensington stone contains such "pentathic numeral signs," and the inscription ends by stating the year 1362 written with the same kind of signs. On closer inspection, however, the numeral signs

∩	h	∩	∩	•	I
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	II
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	III
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	IV
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	V
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	VI
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	VII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	VIII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	IX
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	X
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XI
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XIII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XIV
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XV
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XVI
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XVII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XVIII
∩	h	∩	∩	∴	XIX

FIG. 4.—A page with calendar and "golden" figures, from Ole Worm's *Fasti Danici* (1643), Hafnia (= København).

of the stone seem somewhat different in form as well as in application from the types given by Ole Worm. The Kensington rune carver, e.g., wrote the number 14 with two digits, 1 and 4, as we do, instead of with the single 4-twigged stave, as in Worm (see fig. 4), and the signs for 22 and 1362 likewise follow the method of division of the Arabic system. For 10 (?) the Kensington stone has a circular form (∩) instead of the cross-shaped sign in Worm.²³ On the stone the

²³ Holand identifies this sign, which looks like the Dalecarlian rune for the letter O and the runic numeral for 19, with 10, probably through conjecture (twice 5 written with runic numerals, nearly like two P's close together: qp). According to the *Fasti Danici* this sign (a circle on a stave) might correspond to our 19.

uppermost twig is always drawn from the top of the stave; in Ole Worm, somewhat below the top. Holand shows some very similar numeral signs in a vellum almanac from the fifteenth (?) century found in the museum of Oslo (see fig. 5).

These numeral signs were already in use at the time in medieval Scandinavia along with the Roman letters. The fact that the carver of the Kensington inscription used the runic numerals of the calendars



FIG. 5.—Extract from a calendar. The pentathic figures (the calendar *gyllental*, "golden numbers," 19 in all) are seen on the lowermost line. The Arabic figures in the lowermost line but one have been added later and refer to the Latin letters on the middle line above them. These letters represent the weekdays of the month of November, the week being reckoned as *Abcdefg*. The small illustrations in the top section are connected with certain of the weekdays, indicating seven festivals or calendar days of the month (from left to right): All Saints, All Souls, Martinmas, The Virgin (Maria), St. Clemens, St. Catherine, St. Andrews. (From Holand, 1932, p. 129.)

with twig digits in this way shows a detached modern attitude. It occurred to him that they would be easier to carve on the stone. No doubt he was even accustomed to writing them on vellum. But it is true that they have not been found on any other runic stone in the world. The case is unique—just as unusual as the placing of the date at the end of the inscription. The man was obviously used to writing both ordinary figures and dates according to the same system, i.e., Arabic numerals.

Anyone who has read P. A. Munch's treatise on the *Algorismus* (the Latin work in the *Hauksbók*), now a hundred years old, need not wonder at the case. Writing with Arabic numerals in the fourteenth century was a new art in the Scandinavian countries, but an old one abroad. "After Hauk's time, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Arabic numerals are frequently found in Norwegian and Icelandic codexes, partly as chapter numbers in the margin, partly also as dates and sums."²⁴ Holand has mentioned this

²⁴ Munch, P. A., *Algorismus, eller Anviisning til at kjende og anvende de såkaldte arabiske Tal, efter Erlendsön's Codex*, *Ann. Nord. Oldkyndighed*, vol. 2, p. 354, 1887-1888.

in his books and refers to works by O. Friesen, Bugge, and Gjessing.²⁵

The custom is so old that a rune carver about the middle of the fourteenth century might very well be familiar with the use of these numeral signs, the twig signs, then so modern. He must have been a trained scribe and rune carver.

If we imagine a forger as author of the inscription, working far west in Minnesota after the middle of the last century, but before 1895, where would he have obtained his knowledge of the runic numerals? And if this incredible thing should be so, how foolish to use them if he wanted to make an imitation of a runic stone! A forger would at most have ventured to put Roman numerals on his runic fabrication, and even then he must have been fairly skilled in the late runic custom.²⁶

Indeed, much more probable is the explanation that the rune carver was an Old-Swedish scribe or expert on writing who was accustomed to using these signs, well known at the time, and who, perhaps because he was in a hurry, found it more practical to carve them in stone. Indeed, he was on an expedition of discovery, had traveled much, and for many years had been out of touch with conditions at home.

More than half of the Kensington runes look correct and genuine, as they agree with the 20 runes of the *Codex runicus* of the Scanian Law. (MS. extant from about 1300.) The following nine deviate more or less (see fig. 6):

a b d k n t — u (=w) ä ö

²⁵ Holand, Hj. R., 1932, pp. 127 and 256 (with illustration from Algorismus); 1940, pp. 180-182. For later works about this question, see here footnote 22, p. 18.

²⁶ Runic stones with Latin dates are known particularly from Gotland, the earliest one, from Vallstena, dated 1326; a Latin inscription with black-letter writing occurs on the edge of the stone. On a chancel painting in St. Rådakirke in Värmland the year 1323 is rendered with Roman numerals (Brate, E., *Sveriges runinskrifter*, pp. 92-93, 1922). In the calendars and annals of the time there are numerous examples of the use of Roman numerals. Otherwise a circumscription was used, such as, "fourteen hundred years and one year less than *fem tigi* (i.e., fifty)," as seen on two stones in the parish of Lye, Gotland. But as shown by Holand there are in the documents of the Middle Ages, in the Swedish *diplomataria* and in the Icelandic annals (*Vetustissimi* down to, thus before, 1314, that of Skalholt down to 1362, and *Rymbegla* from about 1300) numerous examples of a knowledge of decimal notation. The Kensington rune carver thus may have belonged to the Old Swedish period. On the other hand, a later rune forger cannot have found the twig signs in Liljegren's *Runlära* from 1832, where only the real runes are mentioned (p. 194 ff., cf. pp. 211-213).

	Kensington Stone	Scanian Law Cod. run. (ab. 1300)	Dalecarlian runes, from Liljegren (1832)	Selected specimens of characters (majuscules and minuscules), chiefly from L. F. Rääf, "Bokstafs-former under medeltiden enligt Sverges offentliga handlingar" (between 1164 and 1513) *	
				1250-1300	1300-1500
a	X	1	X	A	A a a a z
b	∟	B	B	∟	∟ a
p ð d	∟	∟p	∟		
e	+	+	+		
f	∟	∟	∟		
g	∟	∟	∟		
h	*	*	*		
i	∟	∟	∟∟	∟∟	∟∟ ∟∟ ∟∟
j	∟	∟	∟∟		
k	∟	∟	K		∟ ∟ ∟ ∟
l	∟	∟	L		
m	∟	∟	∟		
n	∟	∟	∟		
o å	∟	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟ ∟	∟
p	B	R	∟		
r	R	R	∟		
s	∟	∟	∟		
t	∟	∟	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟
u v	∟	R	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟ ∟
y	∟	∟	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟ ∟
ä	X	∟	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟ ∟
ö	∟	∟	∟	∟	∟ ∟ ∟ ∟
(å)			*		

* Table in vol. 15 of K. Vitterhets-, Historie- och Antikvitets-Akademien Handlingar, Stockholm, 1838.

FIG. 6.—Runes and old-fashioned characters.

Further, the Kensington stone has three signs not found in the *Codex runicus*, viz, the signs for *p*, *j*, and *y* (= *ü*). Among the above-mentioned signs, however, the *n*- and *t*-runes are old forms, common on most of the early runic stones, also a *j*-rune was known in the older rune alphabet. But the others are rare or unique, e.g., *B* used for the sound *p*. When *B* in the "fourth runic period" was to be used for *P*, the rune was provided with two dots (a "dotted" rune \mathfrak{B} , at any rate on the Danish stones).²⁷ The rune carver here did not use this. In a single place he used a *b*, viz, in *bloð* (line 8). The rune of the Kensington stone for that sound, \mathfrak{b} , looks completely wrong, but the rune may not have been finished (because of the necessity of haste on the part of the rune carver?) and perhaps should have been a complete \mathfrak{B} or \mathfrak{b} (cf. Appendix, p. 54).

The other peculiarities perhaps are worse, but we shall see presently that *þ* used for *d* and *ð* in *dagh*, *bloð*, *Vinland*, etc., is not surprising (cf. the sword pommel from Ikast with the Latin word *pominum* = *dominum*, and several similar instances).²⁸ Indeed, the inscription on the Kensington stone is from a period when new forms were introduced by imitation of the Latin letters.²⁹

PALEOGRAPHIC SIGNS

(Cf. fig. 6)

The time of the runes in Scandinavia was ebbing away. The Latin writing was imitated on stone. It began with the first dotted runes in the eleventh century, which attained a certain similarity to black-letter writing when a dot or a small upright twig was placed in the *u*-rune, the inverted *U*, in order that it might be used to denote the Scandinavian sound of *y* (*ü*), sometimes even two dots or points inside the *U*³⁰ or a small horizontal pointlike twig on the *I*-stave, which was to be turned into a sign for the vowel *e* (pp. 54, 58). The Latin script came to central and southern Sweden via Norway, brought by monks from England.³¹ They often used a manuscript *y*-sign provided

²⁷ Jacobsen, Lis, and Moltke, E., Danmarks runeindskrifter, texts 947 and 966-967, 1942.

²⁸ Brøndum-Nielsen, J., Danske runeindskrifter, Aarb. Nord. Oldkynd. og Hist., pp. 205-206, 1917. Holand, 1932, pp. 238-239.

²⁹ From the tenth century the Latin writing had forced the rune masters to invent different signs for *u* and *y*, *i* and *e*, *k* and *g*, etc.

³⁰ Jacobsen, Lis, and Moltke, E., op. cit., texts 980-981.

³¹ Friesen, O.v., Vår älsta handskrift på fornsvenska, K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-samfundet i Lund, vol. 4, p. 3, 1904. "Västergötland got her Anglo-Saxon script via Norway." Christianity was preached in these regions by

with a dot above (*y*, insular point script). Later, from the fourteenth century, the same feature appears in German texts as sign for an inverted *u* (originally with a small *e* placed above the *u*): *ü*. In the same way the signs *ö* and *ó* arose in German script (originally with a small *e* placed above an *o*).³²

The peculiar *ö*- and *y*-runes on the Kensington stone thus are easily explained when interpreted as applied black-letter writing. They are not runes but transferred (conventionalized) minuscules or majuscules. The rune carver has constructed them from the medieval monastic script. He may similarly in a hurry have constructed some of the other unusual signs, because on his long travels covering so many years he had forgotten some of the runes he was in need of. Or the man may actually have known such signs from his monastic school at home—more or less locally used runic signs resembling the kind we find in the Dalecarlian runes of later times. But also the Dalecarlian runes originate from the Middle Ages.³³

The *k*-rune is here only an inverted *k*, i.e., conventionalized black-letter writing in which the lateral twigs of the *k* are turned forward instead of backward.

The *j*-rune (used in *skjar*, line 4), which is otherwise unknown, is very much like a written black-letter *i* or *j*, stiff and conventionalized, really transformed like an inverted rune.

The *v*- or *w*-rune occurs in several places in the inscription; here a consonantal *v* was needed, whereas the *u*-vowel accidentally and strangely enough does not occur at all. The rune carver has resorted to the expedient of using the Latin minuscule *w* (double *v* or *u*) placed on a stave. In order not to mistake this sign for the *m*-rune,

Englishmen (cf. the list of the bishops of Västergötland: "a large number of these were English"). It thus appears in the fact that the earliest book script in Swedish was with Anglo-Saxon types: *y*, *æ*, *þ*, and *ð*, but Latin signs were used for *v*, *f*, *r*. *þ* supersedes the voiced fricative *ð*, which is only regarded as a variant of *d*. "The fixed dot over the *o*-sign to denote *ö* in the thirteenth century is detached from the *o*-element (the oval), the beginning of our two-dotted *ö*."

³² Cf. Brøndum-Nielsen, J., *Palæografi, Nordisk Kultur*, vol. 28, A, pp. 14-15 and 23. "The two dots above *u* in modern German *ü* are remnants of a dissolved *e*." . . . "*þ* in German words is designated by *oe* or *ö* or *ó*." Cf. examples in Jansson, Sam, *Svensk palæografi*, p. 127: "*vilia býnder aff nÿo býggia bý.*" Translation: (if) peasants will build a village of new.

³³ Liljegren, J. T., *Run-lära*, p. 40 and pl. 1, 1832. Noreen, Ad., together with Boëthius and Levander, *Dalska runinskrifter från nyare tid, I-III, Fornvännern*, 1906 (see especially the table between pp. 90 and 91). Cf. Holand, H. R., 1932, pp. 120-121, 123.

he put a dot in the left pocket, the rune thus becoming a new "dotted rune."³⁴

His *y*-rune with two dots over (in *illy*, line 9) is also easily recognized from the *y* of the medieval manuscripts, but is nicely conventionalized. This rune might easily be mistaken for a *g*-rune if it had not been provided with an additional dot and also with a transverse line through the stave as in the case of the *j*-rune.

At first glance the *a*-rune is no less singular. Its peculiarity, however, is chiefly due to the small hook on the upper right branch. As in the Dalecarlian runes we here find that the original rune *†* gradually develops into a sloping position in the direction of an *X*. It might be supposed that the carver of the Kensington inscription was a Swede from somewhere in central or southern Sweden, who had been accustomed to finding, perhaps even to using, a similar hook in the written sign for *a*, a form that (as shown by Holand) is not rare in ordinary black-letter writing in various Swedish documents (cf. fig. 6).³⁵ The rune carver probably transferred his own written form to the runic sign. This type of an *a*-rune has never before been found in any runic inscription and thus may be considered a fresh late medieval "runic sign"—a discovery for runology!

The man also seems to have been accustomed to adding two dots above his *a*-rune to denote an *ä*; in the rune he contents himself with adding a single dot before the hook, so that it looks almost like two dots. This sign also is otherwise unknown, but it fits in with the fact that in the Dalecarlian runes an *ö*-sign is formed from the *o*-rune: *ö*.

These new runic signs (*ä*, *ö*, *ü*) are distinctly and consistently carried through in the Kensington inscription,³⁶ e.g., *ä* in *läger*, *äptir*, perhaps also in *frælse*. An *ü*-sign, however, would seem to be superfluous in the last-mentioned word. As the dot (in the figure) even seems to be missing in the rune in question, the *æ*-sound, if so, is in this word denoted in the Latin way by *æ* [from *ae*]: *frælse* (a verbal optative form).³⁷

³⁴ Holand (1932, 1946) regards the *z*-rune of the Kensington stone as a further development of the corresponding letter in a document drawn up by Bishop Nikulas of Oslo in the thirteenth century (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. 1, No. 7).

³⁵ See, e.g., Hildebrand, E., *Svenska skriftprof. Medeltiden* No. 30 (specimen from Västgötalagen dating from 1280), No. 33 (Saint Birgitta's notes from about 1360), No. 34 (from 1387), Stockholm, 1894.

³⁶ Holand, 1932, pp. 120-121 and 123.

³⁷ If the word is to be read as *frælse*, *æ* is presumably intended to denote a long vowel, with a reminiscence of the origin: *frjæ*-.

Ö with an inside cross has rightly aroused surprise among the runologists. Holand is of the opinion that the ö-rune of the Kensington inscription in its shape combines the two (equivalent) signs for ö and ø. The latter (ø) is well known from the necrologies, calendars, and similar works of the Middle Ages (cf. here fig. 6). Holand refers to the Næstved Obituary, in which an initial majuscule has been used, which is formed as an O with an oblique line through it and provided with a pointlike hook above; and in a Norwegian letter from 1321 (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. 1) *Ellingi* or *Øllingi* occurs, beginning with a sign, which very much resembles the rune of the Kensington inscription with an inscribed small *e*-rune.³⁸

And both the latter and the name itself resemble the first name and first rune on the Kingigtorsuaq stone from Upernavik! Indeed, the first name (*Ellingr*) on the Greenlandic runic stone even begins with a circular *e*-rune with two dots in it on each side of a vertical streak (cf. p. 12).

Thus the *ü*-sign (minuscule of *y*) is the first to have loose dots on top; but the *ä*-sign had them at nearly as early a date.

The Kensington rune master, who was active between the years 1350 and 1362, was familiar with dots placed above the letters or within them from Swedish medieval black-letter writing (fig. 6).

THE DALECARLIAN RUNES AND THE H-RUNE

One of the critics of the Kensington inscription (G. T. Flom) thought he could prove imitation of the modern "Dalecarlian runes," thus branding the inscription as a forgery. Some of the signs just mentioned (*a*, *ö*) and the runes for *d*, *f*, *h*, *i*, and *m*, then, were simply to be explained from a modern knowledge of the late Dalecarlian runes.³⁹ But the rest of the runes of the inscription deviate from the Dalecarlian ones! (Cf. fig. 6 and pp. 21, 24-25.)

³⁸ Holand, 1932, pp. 112-118, and 1940, pp. 166-170. Also he refers to Axel Kock, *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, vol. 2, pp. 1-2, 1909: "When rendering OSw. manuscripts in print the editors generally have not considered the different forms of the ø-sign, but have printed either *ö* or *ø*." Kock mentions, e.g., in one of the earliest Swedish prints from 1495, "o with a dot above it." The Kensington inscription, however, was dated more than a century before, and we still lack other examples of a distinctly 2-dotted *ö* dating from its period (the fourteenth century). Holand, however, has found a single instance (1932, p. 117): "In Onarheims Gildeskraa (MS. of 1397) the ø has a single dot (*ö*), but the *u* has a double dot (*ü*) . . . In Den Norske Landslov (MS. of 1325) the ø usually is written with one dot: *ö*, but once it is written with two dots: *ö* (*Palæografisk Atlas*, ed. Kaalund, No. 22a, p. 11, 1903)."

³⁹ Noreen, Ad., *Dalska runinskrifter* . . ., 1906.

Most of the Kensington runes agree with the runic forms in the Scanian Law or those on the runic stones from the "Fourth Period." The rune carver obviously followed an old tradition of writing independent of both the Dalecarlian runes and the Scanian Law. Everything suggests that he was a contemporary of some latinized runic system—in a monastic school—about the middle of the fourteenth century. At any rate, it is neither the early nor the late Dalecarlian runes he used for his work. Nor is it the dialect of Dalarne he used. This, too, has been pointed out by Holand.⁴⁰

The *h*-rune was used initially in *hem*, *hawet*, *har*, *hade*, in final position in *dagh* in order to emphasize that the *g* was aspirated,⁴¹ and after the vowels in *ö**h* and *a**h**r* to indicate vowel length. This last use, *h* as a sign of long vowel, is a most unusual feature, almost without parallel in Swedish or Danish spelling in the Middle Ages, where it was a custom to denote vowel length by doubling (*aa*, *yy*, etc.) or by putting a small stroke above the letter.⁴²

In contrast to this genuine *h*-rune, which in final position may be used as a kind of diacritical mark (on which more below, see pp. 44-45), the other signs here discussed, those denoting *k*, *j*, *u* (*w*), *y*, are not at all runes proper but black-letter minuscules or majuscules as these were written in the fourteenth century, conventionalized for the purpose of being carved on stone. For adaptation to the hard stone they had to be changed a little and provided with diacritical marks.

The rune carver may have known these special forms. If so, it would be valuable if somebody could find out in which Swedish province these singular runic forms belonged, which might give a clue as to whence this rune carver came and which "dialect" he spoke. Or the man may have formed them on the spur of the moment, from the image in his memory of the usual signs of the vellum manuscripts.⁴³

⁴⁰ Holand, 1932, p. 124.

⁴¹ Wimmer, L. F., *De danske Runemindesmærker*, manual ed. by Lis Jacobsen, 1914, p. 28: "The *h*-rune: . . . Only in very late inscriptions *h* is further used to denote *g*: *dah* = *dag*." In the Kensington inscription there is in a way a double denotation (*gh*) of the spirant *g*. This fact may have given rise to the use of *h* to denote vowel length (e.g., *-ah* from *-agh*).

⁴² Holand, 1932, p. 254, may, however, refer to such a spelling as *ahr efter gudz fødelse* in Klemming's edition of *Svenska Medeltidens Rimkrøniker*.

⁴³ Cf. fig. 6, adduced from Rääf, L. F., *Bokstafsformer under Medeltiden enligt Sverges offentliga Handlingar* (specimens of writing from Latin and Swedish documents, between 1164 and 1513). Table to vol. 15 of *K. Vitterhets-, Historie- och Antikvitets-Akademien Handlingar*, Stockholm, 1838.

So far the script of the stone need not create any doubts.⁴⁴

More peculiar and suspicious are (1) the 2-dotted *ö* and (2) *h* used after a vowel to denote length of the vowel. Both of these features of the inscription look like anachronisms. Otherwise all the signs, the runic and the paleographic ones, as well as the three Latin majuscules, AVM line 8, are easily explained and warrantable as seen in the light of the authentic year of the stone, 1362.

The runologists of our day have shown the occurrence of so many new, in part unique, runic variants from the late Middle Ages, on church walls, vellum manuscripts, and numerous other objects, that the peculiarities of the Kensington inscription, apart from the exceptions mentioned, need no longer alarm us. The boldness of the variants should rather, if anything, inspire us with confidence in the genuineness of the inscription. A modern forger with the knowledge of runes and the Old Swedish language to which the inscription testifies would not have been so foolish as to introduce the "anachronisms" mentioned. In other words, we may accept the anomalies as evidence of a medieval style of writing not hitherto met with. The rune carver was a scribe or clerk with a character of his own.

THE LINGUISTIC FORM

The style looks strange, and here and there nearly modern—quite incredible, say the critics, for the time to which the inscription pretends to belong. The language does not look quite like any known Scandinavian form of speech from the fourteenth century; it reminds one a little of Danish, but more of Swedish. But what about such forms as *vi har*, *vi hade*, *vi var*, *kom*, *fan* (without the ending *-um* for the first person plural)? Quite improbable to the sensitive ears of a philologist accustomed to the medieval scholar. Unheard of, unseen in the old vellum manuscripts from the fourteenth century! And further, what of such expressions as *på opdagelsefard*, *vi var ok fiske*, *10 man*, *10 mans ve havet*, *14 dagrise fråm þeno øh*? These and other things sound absolutely spurious, say the doubters. No small effort is needed for a Scandinavian philologist, who knows the medieval language from old diplomas and laws, to tackle these

⁴⁴ Holand (1932, p. 108) may be right in his view that the new formation may be due to a failing memory. The men of the expedition would hardly have carried any "rune book" or list of the current runes with them. The rune carver had to rely on his memory, after being away from home and having traveled through foreign parts. He could not, perhaps, remember any correct runes for *k*, *w* (*u*), *a*, *ø*, *y* (?), and hence resorted to the Latin letters.

monstrous linguistic morsels and test their contents. I must confess that I have myself had some qualms.

But the inscription is long and undoubtedly also contains some old-fashioned forms, indeed some obviously quite archaic forms (*of west, äptir, frâm, peno*, etc.). Consequently it must be examined. Analyze, isolate, test, consider the individual words in the following investigation, and then sum up the whole!

After all, what is linguistic style? Something fixed and immovable? What remarkable speech do we not hear every day, in lectures, on the radio, in the street, in children's speech and mixed language. The written language was never the highest norm for the living language. Those earlier times, indeed, also had both class language and living dialects, of which the texts that have come down to us—on runic stones or vellum—have left us extremely sparse evidence, which permits only a fragmentary knowledge. Undoubtedly we do not know the spoken language of the time.

And here we have to do with quite abnormal conditions. This American runic inscription is more homeless and rootless than any other inscription known to us—more than the Kingigtorsuaq inscription from North Greenland. On the other hand, it is dated, and is Swedishlike in its linguistic form. Its contents tell us that the rune carver must have been surrounded by Norwegian and Swedish men, and their speech seems to have been mixed with both foreign and Old Swedish words and word forms.

The language of the inscription is a kind of simplified basic Old Swedish engrafted with new tendencies; and, as on so many other runic stones, there are plenty of grammatical and orthographical errors and inconsistencies. But, as we shall see, the inscription still testifies to an astonishing knowledge of Swedish pronunciation in the fourteenth century.

OLD SWEDISH

A great many of the word forms of the inscription decidedly agree with old-fashioned Swedish. Old Swedish (OSw.) meets the eye in the very first line.

Line 1. In Modern Swedish (ModSw.) the plural of the word denoting an inhabitant of the Swedish provinces of Östergötland and Västergötland is *Götar*; but the *Göter* (-*ær*) of the inscription is typically OSw. as in the manuscripts from the fourteenth century (in

the Swedish laws, diplomas, etc.): *ok e glæddus vestgötær af honum mæden hans lifdagær waru*.⁴⁵

Line 1. *po* or *på* for early *pā*, with the rune 1 = *o* or *ā*. Common in OSw.⁴⁶

Line 2. *op*, with the vowel *o* (close) is OSw., but ModSw. *up*, *upp*.⁴⁷

Line 4. *vep* corresponding to Old Norse (ON.) *viþ*, *vid*; the original *i* became *e* before the consonant *p* from about 1300.⁴⁸ Thus it is a typical OSw. form for ModSw. *vid*.

Line 5. *fro* or *frå þeno sten*, cf. line 12, *fråm þeno öh*. Here *fråm* is an archaic form of what later became ModSw. *från*. Originally (in Gothic) the form was *fram*, from which such intermediate forms as *fran* and *fra* are frequently found in OSw. and also in stressed position with the form *fram* some time after (e.g., in St. Birgitta's Uppenbarelser, MS. from about 1360, and Lydikinus, Vestgötalagen, MS. from 1300).⁴⁹ *Fran* from *fram* gradually carried the day; but in an OSw. dialect the *m* may have been preserved for a long time and a transition *fran* > *fråm* is possible: the Sw. *a* (long) before a labial consonant was apt to develop into *å* or *o* in the fourteenth century, and the transition, according to Axel Kock,⁵⁰ was completed about 1400. Hence ModSw. *från*.

The Kensington inscription has twice *frå* and once **fråm*, OSw. forms. Whatever may be the reason for this vacillation, the occur-

⁴⁵ From a letter of about 1325 written by a clergyman in Västgötland (see Noreen, Ad., Altschwedisches Lesebuch, 2d ed., p. 143, 1904); *æ* denotes an *e*-sound; hence we find *Götær* or *Göter*. On *a* > *e*, cf. Rydquist, Svenska språkets lagar, vol. 4, pp. 16-19, 93-96; Kock, Axel, Fornsvensk Ljudlära, vol. 1, pp. 116, 121, and 144, 1882. In Magnus Eriksson's Konungsbalkr of about 1350 (Noreen, loc. cit., pp. 32-33) we find a plural form *konunger* (ModSw. *konungar*).

⁴⁶ Kock, Axel, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 1, § 430 (431), p. 353, and vol. 2, § 801, p. 201, 1906-1911, "with labial consonants: *o* < *a*," e.g., *suo*, *swo* < *swā*; *hwo* (*hoo*) < *hwā*; *two* < *twā*.

⁴⁷ Kock, Axel, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 2, § 801, pp. 200-201, 1906-11, *u* > *o* in OSw. in compounds, e.g., *opþera* (*op* with close *o* and comparatively unstressed as in *opā*). On *fro* see line 5.

⁴⁸ Kock, Axel, *ibid.*, vol. 1, §§ 30 and 47, pp. 27 and 41.

⁴⁹ Cf. some more examples in Holand, 1932, pp. 257-258, which in part are due to information from Professor Söderwall.

⁵⁰ Kock, Axel, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 1, § 364, p. 299: "about the year 1400 the transition to a real *å*-sound was completed (early OSw. *gā* > late OSw. *gå*, mostly written *gaa* or *ga*)"; cf. about *ā* > *ō*, *å*, pp. 348-354, especially § 431: "from about 1400 we find examples of *o* instead of *a* (*a*), such as *wor* "vår," *gordh* (< *gårdh* < *garþ*) "gård," *fron* "från" . . . in diplomas from Östergötland from about 1400."

rence of these Swedish variants on the stone, even though *frâm* has not hitherto been found in other inscriptions or manuscripts, is strong evidence that the language of the Kensington inscription as a whole belongs in the fourteenth century.

Lines 5 and 12. *þeno* is an OSw. dative corresponding to ModSw. *denna*. The form *þeno* (also *þenom*) is one that occurs extremely rarely in OSw.,⁵¹ and hence it is remarkable that it is found twice in this inscription. The accusative masculine stem *thenna*, *þenna* is somewhat more frequent. But generally the stem *þässe* is used in OSw. both in the singular and the plural, and this probably also applies to Old Norwegian and Danish. Still the stem of *þenna* is old and is found also on old runic stones (accusative *þanna*, dative *þanni*) alternating with the more frequent forms *þassi*, *þæssi* (*þaimsi*, *þeimsi*). *þeno* in the Kensington inscription in both cases covers a dative, apparently in the neuter. A stone (*sten*) was masculine, an island (*öh*), feminine; but the demonstrative pronoun at the time, in Holand's opinion, had probably fossilized in a certain insusceptibility to gender, so that we may find *i thesso helgho script* (neuter dative in *o* although *script* is feminine).⁵²

Sten and *ö(h)* in the ancient language would have had diphthongs (*stain*, *ey*), but in many East Swedish provinces the vowels were monophthongized as early as the thirteenth century, just as the earlier (=ON.) *ein* became *ecn*.⁵³ The use of *h* as a "diacritical" mark for long vowel, as stated above, is rare in medieval writings, though not entirely unknown.⁵⁴ (See, further, pp. 44-45.)

Lines 6 and 8. *og*=*ok*. Kock points out that the transition of *k* to *g* had already begun in the fourteenth century; for instance, *jak*=*jag*, *taka*=*tagha*, etc., in alternating use often by the same writers. *ok* and *og* are OSw. forms; NSw. *ock* or *och*.⁵⁵

Lines 6 and 11. *äptir* is only found in OSw. In OSw. runic language generally *eftir* (or *aftir*, *uftir*); ModSw. *efter*.

⁵¹ Söderwall, A., Ordbok öfver svenska språket i medeltiden, Lund, 1925, sub verbo *þänne* (*thenne*, *thetnc*). He mentions *themo* as the dative neuter occurring "a single time"; Noreen, Ad., Altschwedische Grammatik, 1904, mentions the form in § 509, note 8, as rarely occurring in writing, e.g., in Diplomatarium Swecanum (ed. Hildebrand, 1878) from the years 1348, 1405, etc.

⁵² Holand, 1932, pp. 242-243, but ON. and OSw. *script* might also be the neuter, so the example is not worth much; more examples on p. 253.

⁵³ Kock, Axel, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 2, § 481.

⁵⁴ Jacobsen, Lis, and Moltke, E., Danmarks runcindskrifter, text, p. 957, note 4, 1942.

⁵⁵ Kock, Axel, Studier öfver Fornsvensk Ljudlära, vol. 1, pp. 35-36, 1882-86; Holand, 1942, pp. 290-291.

Line 10. *hawet* (not *hawit*) is OSw. (cf. p. 38).

Line 11. *skip* with distinct *i* in OSw. in contrast to ModSw. *skepp*. Kock has shown that the originally short *i* in certain forms developed into *e* in OSw.⁵⁶ He writes: "The forms with *i* (*gifva*, *kid*, *skipa*) and the forms with *e* (*geffua*, *ked*, *skepa*) originally belonged to different dialectal shades, and a preceding palatal consonant thus has only in certain districts been able to preserve *i*. The above, pp. 454-456, quoted *skeneben*, *skepp*, etc., like *skepelse*, *skepnad*, with *e* after palatal, originally belonged to a region where this was not the case." To which Swedish province the rune carver belonged may perhaps be suggested by means of such criteria as those mentioned here.

wore, "our," with close *o* in OSw. (as in *stwo*)⁵⁷; ModSw. with open *å*.

Line 12. *ahr*, "year," with long *a* is an OSw. form; ModSw. *år*.⁵⁸

ARCHAISMS

Most of the particularly remarkable words and word forms also bear an old-fashioned stamp.

Line 1, *norr*(men), line 5, *norr* (adverb). The former of these words in ON. is generally spelled *norðmen* (plural), but the form here is spelled according to the pronunciation in OSw., with assimilated *rð* > *rr* as in Norwegian dialects; cf. Aasen, Ivar, Norsk Ordbok, 1873, s.v. *Norðmann*, "inhabitant of Norway: in this meaning always pronounced *norrmann*, without any dialectal difference, Old Norw. *norðmaðr*." Cf. *norrøn* (particularly about the wind) < *norðrøn*. As an adverb the word for "north" is otherwise generally spelled *nor* (Aasen).⁵⁹ Cf. Rydquist, Svenska språkets lagar (1850-1883), vol. 2, p. 451, where we find *nor* in OSw. But why not write *norr* as we often spell *off* for *of*? This is the principle followed by the rune carver. He wrote *norr* phonetically according to the Norwegian and Swedish pronunciation of the fourteenth century.

Line 3. *of west*. If the inscription had been Old Icelandic or Old Norwegian, there would be nothing surprising in this expression.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Kock, Axel, *ibid.*, pp. 459-460; cf. p. 456.

⁵⁷ Kock, Axel, *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, vol. 1, §§ 430-431, pp. 353-354.

⁵⁸ Kock, Axel, 1882-86, vol. 2, p. 407, and 1906, vol. 1. § 429, p. 352. On the spelling with *h*, see here pp. 44-45.

⁵⁹ Cf. ModSw. adverb *ner neder*, "comparative form," Rydquist, vol. 5, p. 125: "a few stems . . . originally: *hvar* (ubi), *þar* (þar), *hær*, *nor*, etc."

⁶⁰ Fritzner, Johan, *Ordbog*, vol. 2, p. 867, 1886, s.v. *of* "over," when referring to movement over something which is thus passed: *suðr of fjall* (southwards over the fell); *of lopt ok um log* (through air and over sea). Holand (1940, p. 294) renders it by "(from Vinland) round about the West." Cf. in *Ynglingatal*: *of austr*, "eastwards."

It would then presumably have to be translated "westward" (from Vinland), and this is probably the meaning of it in this place, even though the language is Swedish and we do not (unfortunately) happen to find the same old expression in the extant literature from the fourteenth century. No doubt it might very well be OSw., but it is hardly common usage in ModSw. in any part of the country. For that matter it might also, in accordance with usage in the old language, be identical with what would have been written as *ofuest*, *offuest*, "very far west," an adverbial phrase that is hardly ever found in OSw. literature either but might very well have been preserved in some dialect through the fourteenth century—in that case found recorded only on the Kensington stone in Swedish. This is one of the points of conjectural criticism of the inscription. But at any rate the phrase is old-fashioned.

Line 4. *skjar* (plural) is also a form belonging to the Middle Ages, as the word otherwise both in ON. and ModSw. is *sker*, *skär*. We have here presumably a late "broken form" (by analogy) as it sounded in a Swedish dialect, corresponding to contemporary words from the fourteenth century such as *siax* (*øra sak*), "six," *sial* (German *Seele*) in Swedish manuscripts; ⁶¹ in the Jutlandish Law *skial* (*um marke skial*), "boundary." ⁶² The tongue or ear of the rune carver led him to render the unusual broken form by the rare *j*-rune instead of *i*, perhaps in order to indicate a "hard" pronunciation of the preceding *k*: *s-kj-ar* (*j* pronounced as English *y*). Was the pronunciation foreign to his ear? (Was he a foreigner?)

Lines 1, 7, and 10. *men* (e.g., in *norrmen*, line 1) is the regular plural of *man*.⁶³ The forms show that in OSw. it was possible to use the word collectively in the singular as it still is in Danish: *alle mand på plads! to mand frem! ti (stykker) til mands*. Besides we find in OSw., preserved from the early language, combination of a numeral with the following noun in the genitive plural, e.g., "thirty men": *XXX manna* (partitive genitive, *manna* is plural), a mixing well known in all history of language (parataxis, contamination); a mixed construction as still used in Icelandic: 200 *manns*, *annan hundrað manns* (*manns* is genitive singular).⁶⁴ A corresponding way of ex-

⁶¹ Noreen, Ad., Altschwedisches Lesebuch, 20³, 31²⁵, 33²⁵. In ODan. *sial*, *siacl* (Bertelsen, H., Dansk Sproghistorisk Læsebog, 1905).

⁶² Kaalund, Kr., Palæografisk Atlas, No. 23, 1903.

⁶³ See Noreen, Ad., Altschwedisches Lesebuch, 1894, Glossary, s.v. *maþer*, p. 151.

⁶⁴ Holand (1932, p. 260 ff.) has collected a good number of instances of this use of the genitive singular (*manns* in a collective function) from Snorre Stur-

pression is not met with in the OSw. literature. Some day, however, we may by chance find in some old document that it was once possible to use such a construction in the spoken language, at any rate here and there in Sweden; then the *ro mans* of the Kensington inscription (line 10) will establish another example: meaning "a crew of 10," "a 10-man party." The strange genitive in line 10 thus is to be interpreted as a collective and elliptical one. The collective use of a *man(s)* is no more peculiar in OSw. than in Modern Danish.

Line 9. *illy*, "evil." This somewhat strange form in *-ly* of **illa* (adjective) should be a dative governed by the preposition *af*, "from"; but it sounds strange and wrong, and the *y* may be due to an error by carving an extra dot in the otherwise unknown, but quite correct, *u*-rune used here. If we read without the dot, *illu*, this would be a normal dative of **illa* in OSw.

illy or *illu* can have been intended only as an adjective in the neuter (dative), "the evil," thus an abstract and nominal notion, but the word is not found as such in the large Swedish dictionaries, where only the adverb *illa*, "in an evil way," occurs. The same applies to the large Danish dictionary, but differently in Norwegian and Old Norse (Icelandic). Fritzner, in his ON. dictionary, 1886 (West Norse), quotes *illr* as an adjective, "evil" (about a person or thing): *sjá vid illo*, "beware of what is evil" (Sigrdrifa 37); *gjalt þu eigi illo illt* (Gammel Norsk Homiliubók); *laustu (=leys þú) oss frá illo*, "deliver us from evil" (ibid.), the last example thus the very form from the Lord's Prayer as on the stone. But the first printed large Swedish translation of the Bible from 1541 had formed the prayer as it is now spoken everywhere in Scandinavia: *frels oss ifrån ondo* (Matthew 6:9).

Here we have thus again an instance of the Kensington inscription showing us a phrase kept in medieval Swedish popular speech but not otherwise recorded in the extant literature (like *of west*, etc.). In Norwegian, too, we find *illa* recorded not only as an adverb but also as the neuter and as an adjective (see Heggstad and Torp, Gammelnorsk Ordbog, 1930: *illr* (*ilt*), e.g., *hin illi*, "the evil one, the devil"; *ilt er illum at vera*, "it is evil to be evil"). Still more impressive in this connection is the old Norwegian rhyme (fragment) known

Iason's Konungasögur, and from the Flateyrbok: *fjöldi manna*. An old usage analogous to *mans* is here *folks*: *þar var talid 300 folks eða meir* (Oddveira Annal sub 1341 in Storm, G., Islandske Annaler, p. 489, 1888); but more frequently with genitive plural: *letuz XXX manna*, "30 men perished," ibid., p. 403 (the years 1346-1349). By a similar development we have in Danish the word *slags* (< *slag*), "kind, sort": *ti slags, mange slags*.

to Holand through the Norwegian peasants in Minnesota, in which *illi* ends a line in an adjectival function.⁶⁵

In the Lord's Prayer in Swedish, in the form from about 1300, it says: *fralse os af illu*. "God save us from evil."⁶⁶

The phrase of the Kensington inscription thus is correct OSw.

NEOLOGISMS

The following words are still more surprising, as they look too modern for the language of the fourteenth century as known from medieval literature:

Line 2. *opdagelse* (*færd*)—not the ending *-else*, which makes its appearance and spreads as a productive suffix as early as the fourteenth century,⁶⁷ but the word *opdage*. Who in Scandinavia ever used this word before the rune carver of Kensington? It is not found in recorded language of the Middle Ages. A word like *opdagelse* in OSw. looks like an utterly strange word, as if it here turns up long before its proper lease of life. Still, *opdage* is undoubtedly, as suggested by Holand, a word of genuine Scandinavian origin,⁶⁸ but spreading to both East Frisian as *uppdagen* and Dutch as *opdagen*, "come to light, appear," transitively "bring to light, reveal, or discover." It has not been found recorded in early Norwegian, Swedish, or Danish. From West Norse the word *landaleita* is known with the same meaning, but it became obsolete at an early date. When was it replaced by *opdage*? Holand's reference to German influence on the Swedish vocabulary as early as about 1350 is particularly instructive.

An extensive immigration from Germany to Sweden took place about 1350 (or earlier). The immigrants obtained rights and privi-

⁶⁵ Holand, 1932, pp. 268-270; 1942, pp. 308-309.

⁶⁶ Holand, 1932, p. 268, quoting Ahlquist, *The history of the Swedish Bible*, in *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 9, p. 93.

⁶⁷ According to Ad. Noreen's *Altschwedisches Lesebuch*, 1892-94, there are many words ending in *-else* in OSw. literature, 1356-1400, such words as *liknelse*, *døpils*, *wighilsi* (p. 28), *styrkilse*, *kynnelse* (p. 43), *styrilse* (p. 166), the first-mentioned of them at any rate 50 years before 1400. Correspondingly in Old Danish; cf. Bertelsen, H., *Dansk Sproghistorisk Læsebog*, vol. 1, 1905: *tilliggelse*, "surroundings" (p. 109), *bestandelse*, *aminnelse*, *begængelse*, etc.

⁶⁸ Holand (1932, p. 229) calls attention to *dagar uppi* in *Alvismal* (verse 35, ed. Finnur Jónsson, 1888) and *Grettissaga*, p. 152, with reference to Fritzner's explanation in *Ordbog* (s.v. *daga*). Cf. Falk and Torp's definition, *Etymol. Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, s.v. *dag*, p. 134, and *Ordbog öfver Svenska Språket*, vol. 1, p. 97, and vol. 2, p. 33, s.v. *dag*. In Sw. dialect *uppedaga*, ON. *uppidagadr*, about a troll who has been surprised by daylight.

leges on an equal footing with the country's own citizens.⁶⁹ Falk and Torp are of the opinion that the word mentioned above was influenced by German *entdecken*, properly "uncover" (a rendering of French *découvrir*), which is also reflected in Sw. *upptäcka*, Early Danish *optække*, "unveil, bring to light"; cf. German *aufdecken*, "reveal, lay bare." The German influence has left its traces in a great many Swedish words, both in prefixes and endings of an exactly corresponding kind as in *opdagelse*, to be found in Sw. manuscripts as early as the fourteenth century, indeed earlier, e.g., in Vestgötalagen from 1285; *opstandelse*, *opfarelse*, *optagelse*, in an increasing number through the influence of "Den Heliga Birgitta's Uppenbarelse," which dates from 1360.

The word *opdagelse* has not otherwise been recorded from OSw., but among the above-mentioned words from the literature of the fourteenth century it would not look remarkable, and it may be quite by accident that it has not been recorded. It can already have been current in living speech at that time.

As to the vocalic quality of the initial *o* (in *op-*) (see p. 30), the stress was once minimal on the first syllable of this composite, but strong on the second one: *updágelse*, *opdágelse*; now *ópdagelse*.

A composite like *opdagelsefärd* ("voyage of discovery") is highly surprising for the language of the fourteenth century. But we find early examples of composites in ON., e.g., *heimskringla*, *konungsskuggsjá*, *sonatorrek-*, and a tendency to even longer compositions in mediæval Swedish and Danish: *hæraphøfþingi*, *hæresshøfþing*, *æmbetzman*, *umboszman*, *hoføplot*, *midlungaman*, *iamlangadagher*, *løghordagh*, *kirkiustæfna*, *scriftemol*, *tianasta-quinna*, *pianostoman*, *gudzspffwalaghsþiæld*, *wor herres fødelses-aar*.⁷⁰

Lines 5 and 11. The same (a seeming anachronism) applies to *rise*, which, of course, is a rendering of German *reise* (Old High German *reisa*, Middle High German *reise*) and is *resa* in ModSw. It is surprising to find this "modern" word so early in the Swedish language, but the context was created on a long voyage, an expedition of young and old warriors and clerks traveling together, whoever they were, presumably each of them originating from his own cultural center in Scandinavia. There is every reason to suppose that the runic scribe was a Swede, but it is possible that one of the partici-

⁶⁹ Munch, P. A., Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden, first part, vol. 1, pp. 596-598, 1862.

⁷⁰ Noreen, A., Altschwedische Grammatik, 1904; Kock, Axel, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 1, 1906.

pants in the expedition was a foreigner (German, Frisian, Dutch, or English). A form like *rise* with a long pure *i* does not agree very well with OSw., the loan from a foreign language perhaps is just reflected in the pure *i*-rune (|), not (†), which has been maintained both times when the word appears in the inscription and is possibly meant to render a diphthong (*ei*).⁷¹ And, be it noted, this word, which was new and rare at the time, has been used only as a technical term, viz, in the compound *dag-rise* "day's journey," a term that may have been first used here to replace the maritime unit of the long voyage, the common measure of the ship's speed. At sea they probably used *døgr* or a corresponding circumlocution in Swedish with which the distance at sea was measured in early times (before the invention of the nautical mile). The distances between Iceland and Norway or Greenland are stated in *døgr*, "24 hours." "Day's journey" (that is, night and day) was a new fixed unit of length for use on land, perhaps used the very first time on this expedition. It appears that the real distance from the seacoast approximately agrees with the measure of the distance as stated on the stone, when this is interpreted as "14 day's journeys" (1 day's journey=75 nautical miles, in all 1,050 miles),⁷² which thus means that the searching travelers were at least 14 days on the road from the coast of Lake Superior or the mouth of the Nelson River (?), but, in fact, most probably a greater number of days. May we rely upon their having counted the days exactly? They may, of course, have carried a wooden calendar along with them for the control of time.

Line 8. *og þep (dep)*, "dead." As the rune carver has found no

⁷¹ The root vowel in this OSw. form *rise*, "voyage, journey," must have been long: imitation of the vowel of Middle High German *reise*, "departure," "warlike expedition." Its transition into *e* in late Swedish is analogous to the transition in *steg* < *stigh* (Icelandic *stigr*); cf. ModSw. *led*, *sed*, *fred* (beside *frid*). See Kock, Axel, Fornsvensk Ljudlära, pp. 457-458, 1882. Conditions are different in OSw. *risi* (*resc*), "giant," with short *i* (Kock, loc. cit., p. 260).

⁷² In connection with the voyages to Vinland, *døgr* and similar conventional terms denoting distance have been treated in detail in the literature about those voyages. Holand has collected the results with reference to the present case (referring to works by F. Nansen, W. Hovgaard, Fossum, Gathorne-Hardy, etc.; cf. Holand, The Kensington Stone, 2d ed., pp. 135-139, 1940). In the old directions for setting a course toward Greenland I find *dagra sigling*, *dagra haf*, "a night-and-day's sailing" (Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, p. 210 ff.), Fritzner's dictionary has the expression *dagróðr*, "as far as one can row in a day," *mikill d.*, "a long day's rowing." On land, *røst*: Thor's hammer lay hidden "eight rosts" down in the interior of the earth. Other terms were also used: *dags för*, *viku för*, "week's journey." See Petersen, N. M., Haandbog i den Gammelnordiske Geografi, pp. 132-135, 1834.

difficulty in writing *ö* in other words (lines 1, 7, 12), there must be a special reason for his spelling this word with an *e*. Perhaps his own dialect has just made this spelling natural to him. Thus *døgr* and *degr* alternates in the Flateyjarbok (about 1389).⁷³ Both A. Noreen and Axel Kock adduce many examples of corresponding conditions (delabialization); *ø* > *e* is a frequent transition in early Swedish. Kock adds: "in certain tracts," e.g., *svefn* for *svøfn* ("sleep"), *breðr* for *brøðr* ("brothers"), *fetr* for *føtr* ("feet"), *bret* for *brøt* ("bread"), *hera* for *høra* ("hear"), *oferi* for *oføri* ("a mess");⁷⁴ in the Erik's Chronicle inversely (labialization) *øptir* for *eptir* ("after"), *gønom* for *genom* ("through"), *thøm* for *them* ("them"). This shows that this alternation of *e* and *ø* was fairly common.⁷⁵ Rydquist also gives a great many examples: *kemr* for *kømr* ("comes"), *red* for *rød* ("red"), *ex* for *øx* (*yx*, "ox"), etc.⁷⁶ Holand has found the same spelling as in the Kensington inscription, *ded*, in a Sw. letter dating from 1390: *effther the henne hosbonde her Jens Herne ded er* ("as her husband Mr. Jens Herne is dead").⁷⁷

Line 10. (*we*) *havet* ("at the sea") is surprising because it has the definite article *-et* instead of *-it*, and particularly because the noun is uninflected after *we(d)* where we should have expected a dative with the ending *-u*.⁷⁸ The endings *-in*, *-it*, *-ir* had become *-en*, *-et*, *-er* in the manuscripts of the fifteenth century.⁷⁹ Axel Kock has shown that the Björkörätten uses final *e* after *ā* in the penultimate (this occurs frequently also in Västgötalagen: *late*, present subjunctive of the verb "to let": *gialde*, *gialdæ*, present subjunctive "pay"; originally *gialde*; *ware*, *gange*; *baþæ føtær*, "both feet"; and that the scribe was probably a West Goth. The old laws, as Västgötalagen, Björkörätten, were drawn up for their respective provinces, and it is natural to assume that their copyists originated there. The West Goth must have written under the influence of the dialect change taking place in Västergötland.⁸⁰

⁷³ Cf. Holand, 1932, pp. 265-266.

⁷⁴ Kock, Svensk Ljudhistoria, vol. 1, p. 127, and vol. 2, pp. 38-42 (§ 623).

⁷⁵ Cf. Holand, 1932, pp. 266-267.

⁷⁶ Rydquist, Svenska språkets lagar, vol. 4, pp. 98-101.

⁷⁷ Holand, 1932, p. 267: "in a letter of 1890 from Lödelse, West Gothland" in Diplomatarium Norvegicum, vol. 4. No. 586.

⁷⁸ The examples adduced by Holand (1932, p. 251) from about 1350-1400 (*j rødha hafuit*, Svenska Medeltids-Postillar, Kleming's ed., pt. 1, p. 7, and *in i riket*, Konungsbalker, Noreen, Altschwedisches Lesebuch, p. 53) are irrelevant as they are accusative forms used after verbs of movement.

⁷⁹ Kock, Axel, Fornsvensk Ljudlära, p. 146, 1882 (from Rydquist).

⁸⁰ Kock, loc. cit., pp. 145-146 and 156-159.

The omission of final *þ* (in *weþ*, "with," line 10, cf. line 4, on the stone) is not unknown but is not frequent in OSw.⁸¹ On the vowel *e* for ModSw. *i* see page 30, under line 4.

THE STYLE

We have still to consider the total impression of the style. The runes show the way: only half of them were genuine runes; the rest were the Middle Ages in disguise, monastic or school script transferred to stone.

The Kensington inscription resembles no medieval text handed down, whether on stone or on vellum. As compared with other runic inscriptions it is more communicative than most and offers special topical details about something unusual. It is peculiarly personal and emotional, epic-dramatic in contents.

The rune carver feels himself to be surrounded by unknown enemies and now wants to leave a memorial behind. He was under the necessity of using runes on a stone. He must have known some local individual runic system. But the inscription might just as well have been written on vellum or on a whitewashed wall, and it is without any mysticism.

The language is about half OSw. dialect, unraveled word by word; but as far as we can see it teems with anomalies and grammatical errors and resembles a medley of archaic and modern forms and, furthermore, contains an alien element. The style, perhaps, as suggested by Holand, may be interpreted as an approach to the "colloquial" language of the fourteenth century. But in my opinion this holds good only in part; rather this abridged style developed on the long journey on which many Goths and Norwegians from various cultural centers were together. Their different dialects and schooling may have given rise to discussion about "language." A mutual influence took place, more or less consciously. The result was a mixture of a somewhat artificial language and a careless one. Here one can picture great change and looseness in the words of the inscription. They are, so to speak, full of foreboding unrest. They originate from a very unusual situation, which perhaps has only one analogy in the history of the runic stones—that of the three men from Kingigtorsuaq north of Upernavik in Greenland.⁸²

⁸¹ Holand, 1932, sect. 58, p. 250, refers to Noreen, *Altschwedische Grammatik*, § 308, 1904, and *Västgötalagen* (1285), ed. 1827 by Collin-Schlyter, p. vii.

⁸² Nearest in situation and style probably comes the Hönen stone of Ringerike (see Neckel, *Die Erste Entdeckung Amerikas*, pp. 83-84). We may think also of Jørgen Brønlund's death diary, the lines of which are carved on the Mylius-Erichsen stone near the Langelinje promenade in Copenhagen.

On the island near Kensington there must have been a most serious *periculum in mora* for the 10 men of the crew who were left behind since the large party of men had ventured on the dangerous exploration inland. Hence the inscription was made in a hurry, perhaps in fear and horror, but was copious enough to serve as an explanation to the men left behind "by the sea" or whoever else might search for those missing and remaining.

The rune carver was a learned clerk who was an expert on runes rather than a warrior. And he must have belonged to the younger generation among the travelers. He belonged to a party of brisk and bold adventurers who for six years had been traveling by sea and land and had gotten far away from the "school" habits of their homes. They must have been accustomed to hearing one another's dialects. The rune carver seems to have disregarded petty academic rules of spelling. His language seems to have been disintegrating. Perhaps the words were dictated to him, pithily and hurriedly. We do not know the origin of his linguistic usage and habits of writing; they may testify to the instruction of a teacher with a character of his own, or to discussions taking place in this small traveling community. Perhaps some individual dialectical habits come through in his very personal and epically formed style. Hence it has a strange and novel effect. The secret perhaps may be found through a study of the style including the dialect.⁸³

To me the colloquial language of the rune carver strikes through from first to last, not least in the "incantation" in lines 8-9: *fræclse* (verb in the optative, "save (us)"). Here he reveals his connection with the church. Of course, in a catastrophe like this, where the routed remaining members of the expedition were in danger of their lives, one must invoke the *Virgo Maria*.⁸⁴

The young man spoke a different dialect from that of the man who dictated to him. He did not speak like the older men. Their *aftir varum skipum* became in his speech *äptir vore skip; röda* became

⁸³ Lis Jacobsen in *Nye Runeforskninger*, p. 5, says: "But further no secret should be made of the fact that so great real and methodic advances have taken place within philological and historical research that we are able to understand the language of the past in a way, it seems to me, essentially different from what was formerly the case. We have learned to interpret the documents with an intimate, concrete solidarity such as is extremely rarely found among previous investigators. This living contact with the sources characterizes the efforts of our time within the study of antiquity." Cf. also Bæksted, A., *Vore yngste runeindskrifter*, *Danske Studier*, vol. 36, 1939, particularly pp. 111-114.

⁸⁴ Holand, 1932, on invocation of the Virgin Mary, pp. 247-248, and 1940, pp. 268-270, 301-309. Cf. pp. 35 and 46.

röde; *döþa* became *deþ*; the latter form looks like a neuter (singular), perhaps induced under the influence of the preceding *man* (instead of *men* in plural), which means the part of the "crew" that was dead (*deþ*, cf. pp. 37-38).

He heard the German *reise*, and perhaps during the travel had gotten into the habit of pronouncing it with a long *e* or *i*: *rese* or *rise* (*rijse*). To his ear the foreign diphthong *ci*, MLG. *ci*, may have seemed a monophthong. As a foreign word he left it uninflected in the inscription.

The short forms (*wi*) *hade*, *har*, *war*, *kom*, and *fan* jar on the philologist's ear as deviating from the typical literary style, but they may very well be explained from the possible (viz, exceptionally occurring) forms in the early language of the middle of the fourteenth century.⁸⁵ All this may be considered from the same view as that taken above—what Holand terms colloquial usage, the forms of the natural conversational speech of the younger generation, which would have come through more or less completely in this inscription.⁸⁶ After all, they might perhaps sound like this (see pp. 28-29) in the speech of the younger generation about the middle of the century, particularly by a somewhat singular individual who was somehow quite detached from the school language, or was influenced by a dialect other than his own. It has become a vulgar language in sharp contrast to the conservative forms of the literature of school and church.

The fellowship of the old Scandinavians on their travels through those many years must have had not only a leveling effect on their speech but must also positively have evoked old-fashioned words from the Norwegian and Swedish dialects of the Middle Ages. This in part

⁸⁵ I shall not here repeat all the examples of such OSw. and ODan. verbal forms (first person plural) as those above, mentioned by Holand (1932, pp. 233-236) and already previously adduced by better-known linguists. The linguists quoted by Holand on that occasion are Falk and Torp, V. Dahlerup, H. Bertelsen, Brøndum-Nielsen, and G. Indrebø; and among works containing such forms are Lucidarius (from about 1350); Svensk Diplomatarium; Diplomatarium Norwegicum; Queen Margrete's letter 1393 (Molbech and Petersen, Diplomer og Breve, No. 22); Klemming's edition of Medeltidens Rimkrøniker; Codex Bureanus, etc.: *wī gaa til bordh, the svenske kom først; wī gawe, wī unne, wī bide, we henghe*, etc. in the language of about 1350-1400. G. Indrebø gives these examples from the fourteenth-century language: *gefuir w̄er* (we give), *setti mer, sætti mer* (we set, trans.), *hefuer þer* (you have), etc.

⁸⁶ Cf. Brøndum-Nielsen, Gammeldansk Grammatik, vol. 1, p. 24: "The fact well known in the present day, that there are many degrees of spoken language, colloquial speech in town and country, language of lectures, of the theater and church, etc., can be traced far back in time." Cf. Trygve Knudsen in the Finnur Jónsson Festskrift, p. 448; Seip, Norsk språkhistorie, pp. 340-343.

explains the occurrence of, respectively, the modern and the archaic forms in this remote inscription.

Could there have been a conscious tendency in this vagary of speech among the travelers—a linguistic smartness or jargon? Or was it rather a topical common speech ground down by the daily frictions of the dialects—a consciously intended “short language,” a purist “lingua franca”?

It might seem appropriate to call to mind Otto Jespersen’s brilliant studies on neologisms, mixed languages, hybridism, and pidgin English—all realities. Read in his *Language* (1922) the chapters about linguistic play and word creation, about isolated children’s (twin’s) construction of quite new languages, about the history of language, sometimes by way of sudden alterations; and about Horatio Hale’s theory of linguistic development.⁸⁷

Near Kensington in Minnesota we have, on the other hand, found a specimen of language apparently from the Middle Ages and originating from a small isolated Scandinavian community of grown men roaming beyond Greenland to Vinland, a mixed group with different dialects and new views. Result: a cocktail of medieval Scandinavian dialects!

I surmise that in the dramatic hours of the carving of the inscription the dictator (perhaps a Norwegian) represented the conservative tendency (*illu, of west*, etc.), whereas the scribe or carver (perhaps a Swede, a Goth from southern Sweden) represented the modern tone. It was he who in the urgency of the moment kept to the shortest possible forms, aiming at a kind of old-fashioned telegraphese, left out a word like “we” and once or twice a verb, dotted the vowels or forgot the dots. The result was a kind of runic shorthand with abbreviations, etc.—up-to-the-minute in the 1360’s among these first emigrants!

FURTHER PHILOLOGICAL IMPRESSIONS

This matter can and ought to be investigated deeper than has hitherto been done. The present paper is only to be compared to the impression after the first turning of the spade. Under the roots of the tree the stone lay hidden with its philological riddles. It has not yet been completely brought to light, even though the light falls more clearly on certain points than it did 50 years ago when the stone was

⁸⁷ Cf. Otto Jespersen’s *Language*, p. 181 ff. and 213 f., London, 1922, and various Danish works: *Nutidssprog hos børn og voksne* (1916), *Børnesprog* (1923), and *Sproget* (1941), with more Danish details.

found by the Swedish farmer. Certainly a find with undreamt-of and far-reaching consequences, if the runes are genuine!

Axel Kock with Lyngby (versus Rydquist) emphasized in his books that about the middle of the fourteenth century "greater" (i.e., increasing) linguistic differences had developed, which resulted in the Middle Swedish dialects we know from the time of the provincial laws. Thus the dialects already flourished before 1350, "really different dialects," so that there is a connection between the language of the old provincial laws and the language of Skåne, the Old Skånish dialect, which again had Skånish-Danish character. But Kock did not make a secret of the fact that our knowledge of these problems was still (in 1886) very defective:

Most of our provincial dialects are still too imperfectly investigated, and among the early monuments which are most likely to give information of the early form of our dialects, the runic inscriptions, the place-names, and the diplomas are for the most part either unreliably or incompletely published or not published at all.⁸⁸ . . . But in this connection it should further be noted on the one hand that, as remarked by Lyngby, many a minor difference might be found in pronunciation which the comparatively imperfect writing was unable to render, and on the other hand that the dialects in more remote districts might differ materially from the language in the provinces for which we have provincial laws left.⁸⁹ . . . And also when a dialectal peculiarity in the provincial laws does not occur in the present dialect of the province, this is no sure proof that this dialectal peculiarity did not exist in the province five or six hundred years ago. This appears clearly from the vowel harmony of the Vestgota writings.⁹⁰

It is evident that Kock formed a picture of a number of OSw. dialects, now in part disappeared, a far more variegated picture than that which the scanty literary samples of those times now reveal to us.

Dialect forms may be found even in runic inscriptions: Funenish in Master Jakob Rød's *rölyt* for *rödlyt*, "reddish"; Jutlandish in *göræ* for *gördæ*, "made," *mæk* for *mik*, "me," on the chest from Pjedsted (Vejlø); in the church of Lønborg (Ringkøbing) *skol* for *skulæ*; the Kragelund stone (Viborg, between 1225-1250) *bad*, "bade," *rist*, "carved."⁹¹ Peculiarly truncated forms are found on Claudius Claussøn Swart's map of the North from the beginning of the fourteenth century:

haw' for *hauer* (present indicative).

driv' for *driver* ("the sand drifts from the north").

⁸⁸ Kock, Axel, *Studier öfver Fornsvensk Ljudlära*, vols. 1 and 2, 1882-1886, the section "Till frågan om fornsv. riksspråk och fornsvenska dialekter," p. 490.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 494-495.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

⁹¹ Jacobsen, Lis, and Moltke, E., *Danmarks runeindskrifter*, No. 217 (1275-1300, the censer from Stenstrup, Svendborg), Nos. 221, 222, 231.

If the curly mark after *haw* and *driv* in the legends of the old map are intended to render a dialectal pronunciation (Claudius Clavus was a native of Funen), these forms after all are just as advanced as *har*, *war*, *kom*, etc., in the Kensington inscription. But the question is, what is this sign (') intended to denote? Maybe it is only a shorthand trick to indicate shortening of the full forms *hauer* and *drivver* and, if so, is without any importance to our problem.

Mixed language is known also from runic stones, e.g., the Karlevi stone (Öland) from about the year 1000, with Danish and Norwegian used indiscriminately (according to Wimmer).⁹² Strange or wrong spellings are not rare, such as *ura:suti* for *øresund*⁹³ on a stone from the twelfth century; *hir* for *her* ("here"), on a Greenlandic runic stone (Igaliko);⁹⁴ *ston* for *stin* or *stein* ("stone"), on a Swedish one.^{94a}

Errors in carving were frequent; but even if we keep to the forms in the Kensington inscription as they look according to the value of the runes, they may perhaps have been used and heard in a Swedish Götaland province about 1300-1350.

We do not, however, know any dialect that gives *vi fan* for *vi funnom* (or *funno*).⁹⁵ Nor do we know the two-dotted vowels *ä*, *ö*, even though current script letters may be indicated by the unusual runic forms of the inscription X⊕ϥ. And what is one to think about *h* in *öh* ("island") and *ahr* ("year")? Vowel length denoted by *h* was exceedingly rare about that time in Scandinavia. See, however, an example in Brøndum-Nielsen: *gooh* pronounced with a long *o*.⁹⁶ And Ivar Baardssøn's description of Greenland from about 1350 (MS. copy from the sixteenth century)⁹⁷ begins as follows:

Saa sigger vis[s] mend som fød[d]e ehre udj Grønland; and farther down: daa stoer ström ehr ("where strong current is"), with *eh* = *ē*.

⁹² Ibid., No. 245; cf. Nos. 263-266.

⁹³ *Øresund*, The Sound between Skåne and Sjælland, *ibid.*, No. 47.

⁹⁴ See Bruun, Dan., The Icelandic colonization of Greenland, *Meddelelser om Grønland*, vol. 57, p. 121, 1918: *Vigdís M's datter hivilir hir*.

^{94a} Dybeck, R., *Sverikes runurkunder*, vol. 1, p. 37, No. 255, Uppland, 1860.

⁹⁵ If "we" covers an "I" the first person singular form becomes more intelligible, being analogous to *wan* (*uan*) from *winna*. May the rune carver have written "we" where the leader (dictator) said "I"?

⁹⁶ Brøndum-Nielsen, *Gammeldansk Grammatik*, vol. 1, § 24, p. 59: "*h* after vowel *o* to denote length (rarely): *gooh*." As to the dots over the vowels (*ä*, *ö*, *ü*), see here also p. 24.

⁹⁷ *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, vol. 3, p. 248; *Meddelelser om Grønland*, vol. 20, pp. 278 ff. and 322, 1899. Finnur Jónsson, *Det gamle Grønlands beskrivelse af Ivar Bárðarson*, 1930.

Is there possibly a foreign influence in this case?

Is there not a possibility that this spelling habit was connected with the German influence in Central and West Sweden (mentioned above, pp. 35-36), which even before the middle of the fourteenth century began to appear in the Swedish language? Might not these spellings with *ah*, *eh*, *öh* be some early predecessors of the spelling of the German official (Kanzlei-) style, which gradually gave rise to *ah*, *eh*, etc., for the earlier *â*, *ê*, etc., as in modern German *Stahl*, *Mahl*, *Jahr*, *Ehre*, *Sohn*, etc.?⁹⁸

The rune carver must have been an expert on writing, familiar with medieval OSw. dialect and spelling, comparatively expert on runes considering the times, but completely unscrupulous as regards the runology and orthography of the time. Again, is there perhaps a foreign influence? Was he perhaps more or less a stranger who in this Nordic language mistook the gender in *þeno öh*; mistook *a* for *ä* in two words, *fard* for *färd*, *skjar* for *skiär*; left out endings in order to make the carving easier; and even skimmed his work in his hurry?

A forger living about 1895 able to collect in his product all the rare traits here mentioned must indeed have been a most cunning and sophisticated scholar and something of a genius. He would have to have known Ole Worm's rare work on the runes with the "golden figures" and P. A. Munch's *Algorismus*; also Liljegren's and Dybeck's works on the runes from the 1830's and 1860's, and Axel Kock's *Studier* (1886) and *Undersökningar* (1887). But what about several later works (after 1900) on Swedish dialects, runes, and paleography? Over there in Minnesota! Was he perhaps in collusion with learning in Sweden? Did he as late as 1895 live at a seat of learning, near a Swedish library? Who was he, this great X? Learned and ahead of his time he must have been—if he ever existed.

A large number (one-third) of the words of the inscription undoubtedly are genuine Old Swedish (see p. 29 ff.). The same may also apply to some forms that look like old-fashioned expressions (*äptir* used as a conjunction, *of west*; *illu*; *þeno*, etc., pp. 32-35). The form *þeno* is of particularly rare occurrence; but is there not a possibility that it was much commoner in OSw. than suggested by our old manuscripts? After all, it was the victorious form (*denna*)! [It is a puzzling fact that this very form occurs repeatedly in the South

⁹⁸ Behagel, Otto, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, in Paul's *Grundriss der Germ. Philologie*, vol. 1, p. 676 (cf. p. 671, sect. 17), 1901 ("Schon um 1330 . . .").

Greenlandic runic inscriptions of the fourteenth century (cf. Appendix, p. 53)].

Finally, it should be kept in mind that some (one-sixth) of the words of the inscription are neutral: they would in OSw. be written and pronounced nearly as they are now and therefore look like the language of our day: *ok, wi, Vinland, läger, en dags, nor(r), hem, af, at, frälse (frälse)*. They count as genuine OSw. of the fourteenth century.

The prayer (invocation) corresponds to the genuine form from the fourteenth century (see pp. 34-35). An *Ave Maria* is known also from the late Swedish runic inscriptions. The AVM of the Kensington stone presumably means *Ave Virgo Maria*. It occurs here as a fixed formula of invocation, a charm: "Hail, Virgin Mary, save (us) from evil."⁹⁹ The author of the Kensington inscription is probably here thinking of *illa* as "misfortune" rather than "sin." The form *illy* perhaps may be retained as an imitation of an early Norwegian dialectal form corresponding to *illi* (dative singular).

The occurrence of this old West Norse word in such a dative form as *illy* perhaps more than any of the other peculiarities has brought the inscription into discredit.¹⁰⁰ A dot too much may have been carved in the rune, in which case the rune is an error for the *u*-rune (a script rune of an otherwise unknown form, imitation of the monastic script), so that the reading is *illu*. But after Holand's account of this word in ON. and early Norwegian I have little hesitation in accepting the view that this word seemed quite natural to the Norwegians but perhaps sounded a little strange to the Swedish Goth—to say nothing of the evidence of the old version of the Bible as regards the use of that identical word. These are weighty arguments.¹⁰¹

The invocation of the Virgin Mary on the Kensington stone is an

⁹⁹ Holand, 1932, pp. 247-248; cf. above, p. 40, footnote 84. On Christian formulas on runic stones, etc., see particularly Bæksted, A., *Runerne*, pp. 98-112, 1943; Jacobsen, Lis, and Molkte, E., *Danmarks runeindskrifter*, 1942, with texts, pp. 841-842 (the *Ave Maria* formula); see particularly the *Sjörg* stone (vol. I, p. 308); Friesen, O. von, *Runorna, De svenska runinskrifterna*, p. 232 ff., 1933.

¹⁰⁰ The assertion that *illy* looks like an English word is, of course, sheer nonsense. It is true that the form in *-ly* is unknown from Old Norwegian or Old Swedish literature; but *y* [ii] may be an error for *u* or a misinterpretation of a final *i* of a possible *illi* which may have been dictated to the rune carver. This latter explanation has not occurred to any other interpreter. But a stroke of luck brought the advocate of the stone on the right track. See Holand, 1932, p. 269; 1940, p. 308 (cf. above, pp. 34-35 and 40).

¹⁰¹ Holand's account (see above) bears the character of being a scientific investigation and has been very instructive to me. Doubt and criticism are found in many passages, in Holand always held in a genuinely constructive

impressive argument in favor of the authenticity of the inscription. No modern forger could in the last century know how deeply this prayer as here formulated is rooted in the medieval Christian ritual language. With reference to the sources just quoted (p. 46, ftnt. 99), I can further note the Lord's Prayer as recorded in recent times on Shetland Islands, a survival of the Old Norse (or *Norn*) of the islands:

Fai vor o er i chimeri

Halaght vara nam det

La conungdum din cumma

But delivra wus fro adlu idlu

"Father our, who art in *Himmerig*"

"Holy be name thine"

"Let kingdom thine come"

"But deliver us from all ill." 102

In none of the other lines does the author of the inscription show his relation to the powers that be, either God or a leader. No name is mentioned in this inscription. The man feels only that he is a member of the party, one of the survivors. Only the two ethnic names have been preserved, and in OSw. form: *Göter* and *Norrmen*.

The word "we" is otherwise his only distinctive mark, the *wi*

spirit, as he has confidence in the presuppositions of the find; but in few others dominated by a negative tendency, e.g., in Erik Noreen's *Svensk stilparodi* (1944), which practically tries only to ridicule Holand. The same holds good of Prof. R. B. Anderson's "Another View of the Kensington Runestone" (*Wisconsin Mag. Hist.*, vol. 3, 1920); here it is a serious misunderstanding to refer to Fryxell as a runologist, as he never wrote anything about runes. Skeptical views are also advanced by Milo M. Quaife, "The Myth of the Kensington Rune Stone" (*New England Quarterly*, December 1934); Halldor Hermanson, *The problem of Wineland*, 1936; Wolfgang Krause, *Runen in Amerika*, Germanien, 1937; A. W. Brøgger, *Vinlandsferdene*, p. 153, 1937; etc.

Among others the following scholars have written with sympathy, more or less positively in favor of the genuineness of the stone: Profs. Hj. Lindroth, K. F. Söderwall, P. P. Iverslie, G. Indrebö (cf. Holand, 1932, pp. 230, 287, 103); and in America, O. E. Hagen (South Dakota), Francis Betten (Marquette University), F. S. Cawley (Harvard), Stefan Einarsson (Johns Hopkins), A. Fossum, author of *The Norse Discovery of America* (1918), A. Stromberg (University of Minnesota), G. Woodbine (Yale University); also R. Hennig (see above, pp. 4, 14), and Philip Ainsworth Means (Newport Tower, 1942). Cf. Holand, 1942, pp. 318-334.

A brief but noteworthy controversy took place in Denmark between Prof. Aug. Krogh (the Nobel Prize winner), who in *Flensborg Avis*, November 1941 and May 26, 1942, maintained the authenticity of the Kensington inscription, and the philologist Dr. Gudmund Schütte, who for linguistic reasons rejected it (*ibid.*, March 14, 1942). Krogh was strongly supported by Vilhelm Marstrand, the historian and civil engineer; but none of these showed any intimate contact with linguistic method. Ten years earlier W. Thalbitzer had in a Danish newspaper (*Berlingske Tidende*, January 21, 1933) called attention to the problem with reference to W. Hovgaard's review of Holand's book on the Kensington stone, just published.

¹⁰² Cited from Brøgger, A. W., *Gamle Emigranter*, p. 28.

(we)¹⁰³ which implies a solidarity for years between these first emigrants from the Scandinavian countries to Greenland and Vinland, during their wanderings through the huge unknown island country (as they presumed) west of Vinland. This *wi* is omitted in the first line, appears in the third line, and is repeated twice; line 6, *wi war ok fiske*, the last word being a careless pronunciation form as in a hurried report,¹⁰⁴ and line 7, *wi kom hem*. In line 10, *wi* is omitted. The rune carver is nervous and disregards the strict demands of grammar for correspondence (congruity), is doubtful of his spelling, omits both words and endings. The man lets himself go, unceremoniously, to give the information needed.

So long an inscription—12 lines—could hardly have been carved in less than two days (or by two men in one day). Night may have intervened in the performance and caused special disturbances farther down in the text.

The general impression is contrary to the style of the literary sources on record, in which no parallel is known. But is it not possible that all this lack of form is to be psychologically explained from the seven years of travel, the 30 Scandinavians' confusion of tongues, the situation as it appears from the contents of the inscription, and other conditions unknown to us or that may only be guessed at: a scribe with a character of his own, perhaps a conscious "purism," perhaps a foreign element in the party, dictation at the carving and the dictator's or the carver's individual reactions?

The cautious philologist will find that the signification of the Kensington stone has not yet been established. It must be decided whether it has not been condemned too quickly and whether there are not new facts available forcing us to consider the find from a fresh angle, perhaps to begin to come to terms with prejudices of any kind and gradually simply try to take cognizance of the contents. In the development of runology and philology in the time since the stone was found a few years before the end of the last century, so many new facts and views have appeared that it now seems possible to maintain that this peculiar inscription—the runes as well as the contents—in spite of everything may be genuine.

But, false or genuine, a solution is wanted, if possible a proof.

¹⁰³ *wi* with long *i* [*ij*] in OSw. as the *i* in *illu*; see Kock, *Fornsvensk Ljudlära*, vol. 1, p. 420; Seip, D. A., *Norsk språkhistorie til omkring 1370*, pp. 321-322.

¹⁰⁴ Perhaps a paratactic anacoluthia of *wi war ok fiskade* (verb) and *wi war at fiski* (sb.). Many analogous types of sentences are discussed in Otto Jespersen, *Tanker og studier* (1932), the article "Sammenfaldet *og—at*," e.g., *behaq at tryk på døren; værsgo og sid ned! se nu og bliv færdig!* Sw. *gå ut å jaga* (p. 186) *han höll på att skratta = han höll på och skrattade* (p. 188); *de hafde wæret henne och fiske i aæven* (p. 203).

APPENDIX (1950)

THREE HISTORIC DOCUMENTS

(Cf. above, p. 15 ff.)

I

Translation of the document dated at Bergen 1354 illustrated in facsimile in figure 7. From the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Old Collection, 4°, No. 2432.¹

King Magni letter of command given to Powell Knutsson at Anarm [probably Onarheim] to sail to Greenland.

Magnus, by the Grace of God, King of Norway, Sweden, and Skone, sends to all men who see or hear this letter good health and happiness in God.

We desire to make known to you that you are to take all the men who shall go in the *knorr*² whether they be named or not named, from my bodyguard or other men's attendants or of other men whom you may induce to go with you, and that Powell Knutsson, who is to be commandant on the *knorr*, shall have full authority to name the men whom he thinks are best, both as officers and men. We ask that you accept this our command with a right good will for the cause, as we do it for the honor of God and for the sake of our soul and our predecessors, who have introduced Christianity in Greenland and maintained it to this day, and we will not let it perish [*nederfalle*] in our days. Let it be known that whoever breaks this our command shall feel our displeasure and pay us in full for the offense.

Executed in Bergen on the Monday after Simoni and Judae Day [i.e., Oct. 28] in the 36th year of our rule [i.e., 1354] Herr Örmur Östinsson, our Lord High Constable, set the seal.

King Magnus had come up against the great crisis of his life. "In 1350" (say the annals) "King Magnus and Queen Blanche arrived at Bergen and then he gave Sweden to his son Erik, but Norway to Håkon, with solemn promise, and set them on the royal thrones and ordained a bodyguard for them; but he reserved for himself Hålogaland, Iceland, the Faroes, and Hjaltland." Nothing is said about Greenland, but presumably this time as usual it followed Iceland. A great decision had been made, and the plan was to be realized within 5 years. It meant the separation of the realm, the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union.

¹ First time printed and commented on in Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, pp. 120-123, Kjøbenhavn, 1845.

² *knorr* originally meant a special type of ship, but in the Icelandic-Norwegian sources of the fourteenth century it is the king's ship in the possession of the crown of Norway, which was regularly used for the sailing between Bergen and Greenland (cf. p. 14).

But there was a hope, a rehabilitation in a plan for a crusade to the remote Greenland. Out there was the golden straw at which the king was clutching. In four years the plan ripened, and the royal order was issued, as we have seen.

II

In the *Historia Norwegiae*, written about 1250 or earlier, we hear for the first time about skirmishes with the Skrælings in the Norwegian settlements on the west coast of Greenland.² A hundred years later the Skrælings had closed in on the northern settlers and already seem to have expelled the northernmost of them. The story of this has been told by the Norwegian clergyman Ivar Bårdsson (*Bárðarson*, Latinized *Ivarus Barderi*, sometimes abbreviated *Bertt*, *Bere*), who (born in Greenland himself) from 1341 for more than 25 years acted as deputy for the bishop at the Cathedral of Gardar in Greenland during a long interregnum over there. His words have been rendered and translated in a short work, a Latin description of Greenland from the fourteenth century, beginning as follows: "So say wise men who were born in Greenland," etc., a script that has often been commented on.³ We shall here quote only a passage toward the end:

Likewise all this, as said before, was told us by Iffver Bardsen Greenlander, who was principal in the bishop's residence in Gardar in Greenland for many years, that he had seen all this, and that he was one of those who was appointed by the law-speaker to go to the Western Settlement against the Skrællings to drive them out of the Western Settlement, and when they arrived there, they found no man, neither Christian nor heathen, nothing but some wild cattle and sheep, and they fed on the wild cattle, and took as much as the ships could carry and then returned home [i.e., to the Eastern Settlement] and the mentioned Iffver was with them.

Ivar Bårdsson thus found the Western Settlement deserted; only some stray cattle. This was presumably in the summer of 1342.

III

The above-mentioned would be in agreement with another Icelandic report, which refers to an event in the Western Settlement in the same year; but it is only extant in a much later copy from 1637 (in

² See Storm, *Monumenta historica Norwegicae*, Christiania, 1888; Thalbitzer, *Historical data about the East Eskimo*, *Meddelelser om Grønland*, vol. 31, p. 26, 1904.

³ *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, vol. 3, pp. 248-264 (especially p. 259), 886-889; and Finnur Jónsson, *Det gamle Grønlands beskrivelse af Ivar Bárðarson (Ivar Bårdssön)*, ed efter håndskrifterne, København, 1930.

1367. Meeting of the
Hanse towns at
Cologne; their
increasing power
in the Scandi-
navian countries

1370. Peace of Stralsund.
The victorious
Hanse towns

1375-1387. King Oluf

1374. King Magnus
Eriksson died.
Greenland re-
unified with Nor-
way

1379. The southeastern
settlement at-
tacked by the Es-
kimos ("skiræ-
lings")

1380-1387. King Oluf
1380-1814. Norway
united with Den-
mark

1386-1391. Henrik

1387-1412. Queen Mar-
grete

1387-1412. Queen Mar-
grete

1396. Victory of the
Turks at Niko-
polis

1397. The Kalmar
Union: all the
Scandinavian
countries united
under Queen
Margrete

* During the long interval, 1348-1365, there was no bishop at Gardar, but probably never arrived at Gardar, but remained in Iceland where he (1357) was instituted as bishop of the diocese of Hólum. Jón Eriksson Skalli had (1343) been elected bishop of Greenland.

Bishops of Greenland
 1055. Adalbert at Breman (did not arrive at Greenland)
 1112-1121. Eiríkr Gnups-son Upsi
 1124-1150. Arnaldr
 1150-1187. Jón Knútr
 1188-1209. Jón Arnason
 1212-1235. Erlendurson
 1231-1242. Nicolaus
 1240-1280. Olafur

1261. The Norsemen in Greenland gave themselves under the reign of the Norwegian King

1288-1314. Þódr

1314-1348. Arni *

1341. Ivar Baardsson (Þórðarson) arrived at Greenland

1342. The northwestern settlement left by the inhabitants

1346. The Knarr returned from Greenland to Bergen with a rich load

1347. A Greenland ship arrived at Bergen via Markland and Iceland. King Magnus and his queen made a grant of 100 marks for the ornamentation of the cathedral at Gardar

1349. The black plague broke out

1350. King Magnus arranged with the queen at Bergen to reorganize his government for the benefit of his sons

1355-1360. King Hákon VI Magnusson

1350. Greenland loosened from Norway

1365-1378. Alfr

1374. King Magnus Eriksson died. Greenland reunited with Norway

1379. The southeastern settlement attacked by the Eskimos ('Skrezlings')

1386-1391. Henrik

1380-1387. King Oluf
 1380-1814. Norway united with Denmark

1387-1412. Queen Margrete

1397. The Kalmar Union: all the Scandinavian countries united under Queen Margrete

* During the long interval, 1348-1365, there was no bishop at Gardar. 1348-1364, Ivar Baardsson acted as official. Jón Eriksson Skali had (1348) been elected bishop of Greenland, but probably never arrived at Gardar, but remained in Iceland where he (1357) was instructed as bishop of the diocese of Hålum.

1250-1303. The Folkung kings

1290-1310. King Birger

Håkon V

1310-1355. King Magnus Eriksson. Sweden united with Norway
 1332-1360. Skåne united with Sweden

1310-1363. King Magnus Eriksson. Sweden united with Norway
 1332-1360. Skåne united with Sweden
 1340-1375. King Valdemar Atterdag

1286-1310. King Erik Menved

1300-1377. The Pope's seating in Avignon

1346. Battle of Crécy (English victory over France)

1360. Diet at Kalundborg

1360-1660. Skåne united with Denmark
 1363-1389. King Albrecht of Mecklenburg

1367. Meeting of the Hansa at Cologne; their increasing power in the Scandinavian countries

1370. Peace of Stralsund. The Hansa towns

1375-1387. King Oluf

1387-1412. Queen Margrete

1396. Victory of the Turks at Nikopolis

which the words *ad Americæ populos* may be a later translation of an original *ad Vinlandiæ populos* :

1342. Groenlandiæ incolæ a vera fide et religione Christiana sponte sua defecerunt et repudiatis omnibus honestis moribus et veris virtutibus ad Americæ populos se converterunt; existimant enim quidam Groenlandiam adeo vicinam esse occidentalibus orbis regionibus. Ac inde factum quod Christiani a Groenlandicis navigationibus abstinerent . . .

Translation

1342. The inhabitants of Greenland fell voluntarily from the true faith and the religion of the Christians, and having abandoned all good manners and true virtues, they turned to the peoples of America. Some are of opinion that Greenland is quite close to the western regions of the world. This was the reason why the Christians began to refrain from the Greenlandic navigation . . .⁴

Here it is thus said with regret (in 1637) that the Icelandic settlers of the Western Settlement left the community and Christendom in Greenland; that about 300 years before 1637 they had emigrated to the heathen people on the other side of the ocean. One would think of the savages in Markland or Vinland, the Skrælings (Icelandic, *skrælingjar*), i.e., the American Indians and Eskimos.

FINAL COMMENTS ON THE DANISH TREATISE (1947)

In 1949 I mentioned the Kensington stone for the second time in a short account of all the runic inscriptions hitherto discovered in Greenland.⁵ Most of these date from the time shortly before or after 1300. Many of them are fragments only, partly unintelligible. The longest of them is the one found farthest north, on the small island of Kingigtorsuaq about 10 miles north of the Danish colony Upernavik (lat. 72° 58' N.). It has already been examined here (p. 6 f.; cf. fig. 1).

As to the Kensington stone in Minnesota I emphasized again introductory in 1949 the great number of features suggesting that it is a forgery. The "wrong" features undeniably make a strong effect by their number and kind. Thus it has been objected that a few of the runic signs fall outside "the short runic alphabet," the *futhark*, which was universal about the year 1300. The same, however, also applies

⁴ Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, pp. 459 f., 887. Also mentioned by P. A. Munch, *Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden*, pp. 313-314, 1862, and with some criticism by G. Storm, *Om Gisle Oddson's Annaler*, *Archiv f. Nord. Philologi*, vol. 6, Lund, 1890. Cf. also Holand (1932) pp. 82-84.

⁵ Thalbitzer, W., *Runeindskrifter i Grønland*, Grønlandske Selskab Aarskrift 1949, pp. 85-92.

to the "Dalecarlian runes," which held out in the Swedish province of Dalarne right down to the last century, but which, indeed, are genuine enough in their own way and originate continuously from the Middle Ages. The anachronisms of the Kensington runes must be viewed with this background (cf. the following notes). They form a group apart developed from the runes of the past (in Sweden), but mixed with neologisms or "modernisms."

The Kensington inscription belongs to a period of decay in the Swedish (in part also the Norwegian) community, language, and literature. The vocables and grammatical forms of the old language (classicism) were no longer taken seriously in the Scandinavian countries but were increasingly influenced by new "modes," the German manner, pouring in from the south. The Hanse immigrants made a strong impression. German and French books obtained access to the literature; black-letter writing became dominant in the vellum manuscripts. There was plenty of individual neologisms. If we search sufficiently long in the letters and documents handed down from the Middle Ages (about 1350), we shall gradually find examples of "subversive" deviations from the classical court language which formerly reigned supreme. We must also use our imagination: we can imagine considerable lost material. Read again the above-mentioned paternoster in Norn from the Shetlands! Study not only the old Swedish chronicles, diplomas, sigils, and homilies from the fourteenth century but also the letters and other casual writings handed down to our time, including Axel Kock's Swedish dialect-studies (1882-1929).

In Greenland a particular dialect was spoken, and the runic system used here had its peculiarities. During the first centuries after Eric the Red's colonization of part of West Greenland (shortly before the year 1000) there was a lively communication between Greenland and the recently discovered countries in the south, on the east coast of North America. According to the old Icelandic monastic annals the bishop of the Norse Greenlanders in 1121 went to Vinland: *Eiríkr Uppi Grønlandinga byskup leitadi Vinlands*, or according to another coeval annal: *fór at leita Vinlands* "started (from Greenland) in order to visit Vinland." As late as 1347 the Icelandic annals mention a ship "which had gone from Greenland to Markland with 18 men on board and now with a lost anchor entered a West Icelandic fiord." The following year the crew went on to Bergen. Everywhere they advanced the names of Markland and Vinland were revived and became topical. But nothing is stated about the great lakes or any stone with runes or other things they may have observed over there.

The Kensington stone may be a forgery made later. But "sign stands against sign," I repeated in 1949. There is a conflict of evidence. The language of the Kensington inscription has an old-fashioned ring in spite of everything, e.g., the dative form *þeno*, "this," governed by a preposition: *frâ(m) þeno sten*, *þeno öh*. These expressions, however, are "bad grammar" from the point of view of that time. The vocalism of the Old Swedish is more convincing, the vocalic qualities demonstrated by Axel Kock, so characteristic of the vowels of the Götish dialects of the Middle Ages. The words of the Kensington stone show the same nuances of vowels as the Swedish medieval language. The frequently mentioned odd runic letters may be derived from the black-letter writing of the fourteenth century; the rune carver must have been familiar with them and transferred them to the stone in a slightly modified form.

How did this come about? For seven years he had been traveling in company in which different dialects from Sweden and Norway met and were mixed into a kind of insular language. The small party was itself a traveling enclave that was forming a mixed or in part artificial language in order to facilitate mutual understanding. The result was a lingua franca, ground-down words without inflexional endings, phrases and forms of bad grammar, like *æptir wi kom hem*; [*iak* or *wi*] *fan 10 man röðe af blod*, [*iak* or *wi*] *har 10 mans we hawet*—all, however, or nearly all, forms found sporadically in Swedish and Danish literature (letters, laws, rhymes) from the fourteenth century. This may be indicative of the spoken language already then to a great extent having abandoned the use of the Old Norse endings. We can use a good number of these sporadic finds to explain the anachronisms and irregularities in this peculiar inscription.

This is just what I have done in my article in *Danske Studier*⁶ (printed in translated form above), in which our runic stones—those of the whole of Scandinavia—have often been discussed. The Kensington runes are not difficult to interpret and apparently contain no obscurities. The mystery consists in the geographical and historical place of the stone and the fatal intrinsic complexity of the inscription. The strange runes and word forms in my opinion may be partly explained from the peculiar circumstances attaching to Powell Knutsson's "expedition of discovery."⁷ After all, the anomalies of this inscription are no more remarkable than those of the Kingigtorsuaq stone from Greenland, which is genuine!

⁶ København, 1946-47 (pp. 1-40).

⁷ Thalbitzer, W., Powell Knutssons rejse, Grønlandske Selskab Aarsskrift, 1948.

In other words, a close analysis of the phonetic and paleographic details supports the adoption of a new view of this remotely isolated runic inscription. Still there are a few difficult knots left as long as we have not yet succeeded in finding, in the literature about 1350, the use of an *ö* with two dots over it and the use of an enclitic *h* to denote vowel length, as, e.g., in the final line: *frâm þeno öh ahr 1362* instead of *ö*, "island," and *ar*, "year." To this day it must be admitted that the authenticity of the inscription is uncertain. But we may hope that we shall succeed in finding an explanation or, still better, a proof on these points, too.

The last word has not yet been spoken.

NOTES

I. THE GREENLAND RUNES AS CARVED ON STONE OR WOOD IN GREENLAND, WITH CORRESPONDING ICELANDIC LETTERS (TO THE RIGHT)

†	a, q	þ	ð, þ, (t)
†	æ	ƿ	f
	i, e, ei	ƿk	g, k
𐌺	u, v	*	h, g, (gh)
𐌻	(y) o	ƿ	l, t
†	ø, ö	ƿ	m, (y)
†	æ, (ø), ó	†	n
†ƿ	y	ƿ	(p)
		R	r
ββ	b, p, (f)	'	s
q1	d, ð, þ, t	ƿ	(z)

2. THE SECRET RUNES ON THE KINGIGTORSSUAQ STONE

Magnus Olsen has later altered part of his interpretation from 1932 and found out that the six mysterious signs indicate the letters FU,

i.e., the beginning of the runic alphabet (the *fufark*), *pars pro toto* probably being used for exorcism against some threatening peril, maybe the stubborn sea ice or the Eskimos. The two letters, however, are placed in inverted order (UF) in accordance with an old custom: "To sorcery belongs all that is done backwards, e.g., reading the Lord's Prayer backwards or moving in the wrong direction, to the left, counterclockwise, etc."⁸

Further, I shall here mention Magnus Olsen as a keen advocate of the theory of numeral magic being hidden in most medieval runic inscriptions. Already in his first papers of 1932 (cf. also above pp. 9 and 13) he proved that the Greenland Kingigtorsuaq inscription, like several of the runic inscriptions on the Orkneys, is pervaded by an artificial numeric system, i.e., the number of runes and points (. or :) within each line and each section and for the inscription as a whole is accommodated according to certain desirable "lucky numbers" (e.g., 9, 18, 24, 48, etc.). Therefore the manner in which the words are spelled and the points arranged is often influenced by this consideration. To read the runes is called to *raða*, the same word as Gothic *raþjan*, "to reckon, to count." The word "rune" (*rún*) in itself means "secret." The question of numeric magic is not mentioned frequently in the old literature, maybe only indicated once.⁹ But it may be understood that it was practiced in the later runic period from the fact that well-known runologists such as Finnur Jónsson, Magnus Olsen, and others vouch for the existence of it in the various inscriptions they have examined for the purpose of counting their secret "lucky numbers" and systems of numbers.¹⁰

Our comparatively recent discovery of this custom of "counting the runes and signs," observed alike in the wording and reading of (perhaps) most of the old inscriptions, will come in very useful for our explanation of the anomalies or apparent mistakes in them. From now on we should be allowed to consider the irregularities not as the mistakes of a carver or scribe, not as accidental slips, but as technicalities aimed at, a sort of trick. That is, for instance, how Magnus Olsen interprets the singular distribution of the points of punctu-

⁸ Olsen, Magnus, *Sigtuna-amuletten*, 1940 (p. 23); *En futhark-innskrift i Lom kirke*, 1943 (pp. 91-92). Cf. his treatises from 1932.

⁹ Magnus Olsen cites the *Busluban*; cf. his *Sigtuna-amuletten*, p. 29, where he also mentions papers by N. E. Hammarstedt and A. Nordén. Cf. also Feilberg, H. F., *Tallene i folkets brug og tro*, Dania, vol. 2, København, 1892-94.

¹⁰ The first Scandinavian scholar to view the study of the runes in a broader light of Byzantine, Semitic, and Oriental comparisons (from about 1927 on) was the Swede Per S. Agrell.

ation and the faulty spellings and some of the secret signs of the Kingigtorsruaq inscription.

If this theory of numeric magic, which was not advanced till some decades into this century—thus long after the discovery of the inscription discussed here—holds some truth, all runic inscriptions ought to be considered in the light of it. We shall revert to this question below.

On the basis of that theory, all fairly long inscriptions would have required laborious preparation. They could not possibly have been improvised. They may be supposed to have been worked out on the basis of a kind of draft (written on wax tablets or wood or hide, etc.) before being carved into the stone.

3. SINGULAR RUNES ON THE KENSINGTON STONE, X AND ƒ

If a cleric or priest in 1362 really wrote these runes as a kind of draft (on parchment or wood or the like) in order either to carve them himself or to have somebody else carve them on the stone, he must—and this is the most probable—have obtained his education in a monastic school where such runes or quasi-runic signs were known in the fourteenth century.

A fairly great number of the runes agree with those known to us from the Skånish runic manuscript (*Codex runicus*) now found in the Arnemagnæan Collection in the University Library of Copenhagen (AM 28, 8°) and considered to have been written about 1300. Besides the well-known runes, there are on the Kensington stone a small number of extraordinary forms which seem to resemble the majuscules and minuscules used in the Middle Ages. Similarly the Skånish runic inscription is supposed to have been transferred into runes—a conscious anachronism—from an original with ordinary alphabetical writing.¹¹

On the Kensington stone particularly the two runes for *a* X and *j* ƒ give some trouble. I have above (p. 25) suggested that the *a*-rune might originate from a provincial form like the Dalecarlian rune (X), which it somewhat resembles, and that the so-called *j*-rune (if, indeed, it is *j*) might be an imitation of a manuscript *i* or *j* (ordinary form of the letter *J*) in the earliest documents, used alike for the vowel and the semivowel (cf. fig. 6, p. 22).

The sign X—with an extra dot in the *a* rune, used in this inscrip-

¹¹ Hänninger, N., *Fornskånsk Ijudutveckling*, Lund, 1917 (pp. 4-5); Nielsen, Lauritz, *Danmarks middelalderlige haandskrifter*, København, 1937 (pp. 116-117).

tion to denote the sound of *a*—seems to be a secondary formation. The *a* X of this inscription perhaps imitates the black-letter of the manuscripts (cf. fig. 6). In the *a* and *æ* of the minuscules we find the same small hook as found again in the runic form appearing here. The rune carver may have been familiar with these letters from his school, or may have brought along a calendarian runic tablet with the alphabet (perhaps “golden figures”) on which the runic *a* was given the same form as we later find in the Dalecarlian runes—the form which we thus find already on the Kensington stone.

4. \ddot{o} = OE

The relation between some of the runelike pairs of vowels of the Kensington stone appears from what follows:

X X *a*—*ä*
 Ψ Ψ *u*—*ü*.

The dots are taken from the hand-written letter writing. In the lower pair the first “rune” has a dot between the left twig and the main stave in order not to be mistaken for the normal *m*-rune of the Kensington inscription. This is the starting point of the pair of rounded labial vowels in the cleric’s alphabet. The last rune has an extra dot as often the letter denoting *y* (*ü*) in the fourteenth century (see fig. 6). At the same time it has been modified somewhat, viz, halved and the stave provided with a transverse stroke. Here we see a vague connection with the Greenlandic runes (see p. 54), as the *y*- (*ü*-)rune in Greenland about the year 1300 may have one of these forms:

Υ or ʌ ,

the latter with downward-directed twigs as in the runes of Norway. Cf. the special Icelandic form for *y*: ʌ.¹² The carver of the Kensington runes has preferred the upward-directed rune and individualized it with the dots. He must have cultivated this principle in his runes as he must have done in his personal writing.

5. OPDAGELSEFÆRD (see pp. 35-36)

This word, extraordinarily long for that time, perhaps should be interpreted in the light of line 10: “(we) have ten men at the sea to look after our ships.” For whom was this information intended? Was there anybody who awaited the men’s arrival? Who was to be

¹² Bæksted, A., *Islands runeindskrifter*, p. 40, 1942; Jónsson, Finnur, *Interpretation of the runic inscriptions from Herjolfsness*, pp. 289-290.

informed of the presence of the ship(s)? And was there among the men participating in the expedition any definite expectation as to whom they were to "opdage," i. e., search for?

Opdage in the old Icelandic-Norwegian language particularly meant "surprise trolls at daybreak." In Greenland the Skrælings were called trolls,¹³ and as the name of Skræling originally had been used about the natives of Markland and Vinland, it was just here (in America) that people in the Middle Ages could surprise trolls, "daga upp troll." From this meaning the word may very easily in the fourteenth century have been generalized to an approximation of the modern meaning of the word *updaga*: "discover." And P. Knutsson's men no doubt knew for whom they were searching.

6. 𐌆𐌗𐌿𐌹𐌺 = *skiar* OR ? (ENGL. *scar*, "CLIFF, ROCK")

The rune 𐌿 is otherwise unknown. It is either to be taken as a retroverted 𐌿 (*d* or 𐌿) or as a ligature ("binderune") of *le* or *el*, or to be read as *j*, or to be a clerical error for the *e* rune 𐌺.

Reading the rune as *j* (as Holand does) is a makeshift, since the form *skjar* is unknown from the OSw. or ON. of the Middle Ages. Moreover, the *j*-rune which belonged to the primary runic alphabet (the *futhark* of 24 letters) had been dropped in the later alphabet of 16 letters. The word, however, would remind of ON. *sker* or *skær*, Engl. *scar* or *skerry*, and thus make sense in the context; either it would be interpreted as a big stone (rock, boulder) on land, or as a rock in the water, standing out like a small island (*skerry*).

In my Danish article (p. 33) I have taken the word *skjar* to be an artificial "broken" form (*brydning*) from the fourteenth century (although the phenomenon of breaking had otherwise been abandoned long ago), viewing it as a poetic word to be construed on the analogy of similar inherited forms. The rune then might be considered a *j*, but a special rune for *j* was not extant in the shorter *futhark* of that period. If it is really a *j*, the rune carver must have been a learned cleric who was familiar with many Swedish runic inscriptions where a *j*-rune might easily have been found, as it was extant in the old *futhark* (24 signs). The rune used in the Kensington inscription is of an otherwise unknown form, maybe constructed on the pattern of the black-letter script, even a retroverted *j* (cf. fig. 6). But in the Middle Ages they did not distinguish between *i* and *j*. So it is

¹³ See Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker, vol. 3, pp. 438-439 and 469. Cf. Thalbitzer, W., in Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. 31, pp. 28-29, 1904.

nothing less than a riddle how the carver came across the idea of constructing such a special sign for *j*. Hence, I am more inclined to consider the rune as misrepresented and mistaken: the carver had intended to make a simple *l*; the rest of the sign was mere blundering. If so, we have here a spelling with *ia* simply to denote the letter *æ*: *skiar* to be read as *skær*. This manner of spelling with *ia* instead of *æ* (the Latin way), according to Axel Kock, is found in a great many cases in the documents from the fourteenth century. The diphthongization of the sound *æ* is not uncommon in OSw. dialects, as in *sial* (or *sial*) alongside of *sæl*, "soul"; *i hæl* for *i hjal*, "killed, dead"; in runic inscriptions *mierki* or *miarki* for *mærke*, "a mark." Kock further writes: "In certain OSw. documents *a* not rarely occurs instead of an expected *æ* . . ., e.g., *kannir* for *kännir* (now *känner*, "knows"); *i malli*, *emallan*, *mallen* (ModSw. *mellan*, "between"), *map* for *mæþ*, "with"; *garæ* or *giaræ* for *gera* (now *göra*, "do, make")." Such forms may be clerical errors, thinks Kock, though he is not sure.¹⁴ Other examples are OSw. *aft* alongside of *æft*; *aftir* or *æptir*, "after"; *qvar* or *qvær* "clam"; *qvarn* or *qværn*, "grinding mill"; *hvar* or *hvær*, ON. *hverr*, ModSw. *hvar*, "every."¹⁵

Forms like *miarki*, *sial*, *giaræ* would seem to corroborate our impression of *skiar* as an OSw. form used instead of *skær* or *skar* (cf. Engl. *scar*). With some reservation it would also be comparable to the latter part of the name of *Torbiarn*, which is found in OSw. alternating with *Torbjan*, later *Torban* (cf. the Icelandic form *Banne* for the early *Biarne*).¹⁶ If we are to read *skiar*, we might characterize the form as imitative of the old forms called "broken" forms, an antiquated form.¹⁷ But if we have to take *ia* as denoting *æ* (reading *skær*), the word would be quite regular and the mystery solved.

7. *rise* = MODERN SW. *resa*, "JOURNEY, (WARLIKE) EXPEDITION"
(see p. 36 f.)

Thus used in the Swedish "Rimkrönike," the continuation about King Magnus Eriksson, from about 1450. The original of this section of the rhyming chronicle was probably composed and written

¹⁴ Kock, Axel, *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 256-258, 266-267, 1906.

¹⁵ Kock, Axel, loc. cit., pp. 237-250.

¹⁶ Kock, Axel, loc. cit., vol. 2, p. 404, 1909-11. *Banne* is the form we found on the Kingigtorsuaq stone from Greenland (cf. p. 10).

¹⁷ It would remind of an old-fashioned form such as our Danish *skjald* alongside of Swedish *skald*, English *scald*, ON. *skáld*. Cf. in OSw. the name of *Spjallebod*, in which *spjalli*-, "associate" is a "broken" form of *spell*, Goth. *spill*, OE. *spell*.

down soon after the king's death, which took place in 1374 (December 1),¹⁸ but as it has been lost and the copy dates from at least 50 years later, we cannot be sure that its language is in every respect exactly as it was written in the preceding century. However, there is nothing surprising in the fact that a German word should have been adopted in the Swedish language already at the time of the original owing to the German immigration into Sweden about 1350, let alone the possibility that one of the members of the Powell Knutsson expedition may have been of German extraction, even though Swedish-speaking. Already in the beginning of the eleventh century a German named Tyrker participated in Thorfin Karlsefne's expedition.

Here follow some lines from the above-mentioned section of Sveriges Rimkrönike in the linguistic form in which it has been preserved.¹⁹ Note the word *resa*:

Verse

114	konungen hade skane fangith	The King had got Skåne
127	han ville ena <i>resa</i> till rytza- landh fara	He would go on an expedition to Russia
175	Tha rytza komma j thera behaldh	When the Russians came in their poor state
344	huar hade en binzel om sin hals ok sagde, vy äro her komne aa jdre nade	Each had a chain round his neck And said, We have come here by your grace
	öffuer vara lyiff ok lemmer magen j rade	You may rule over our lives and limbs What we promised you we cannot fulfill
	thz vy jdher loffuade kunnom vy ey holde	Therefore we place ourselves in your power
	thy giffua vy os jdher j volla	

Note the absence of inflexional endings after prepositions (*om sin hals*; *öffuer vara lyiff*) as on the Kensington stone (*äptir*) *wore skip*; and in the last line *vy (wi) giffua* instead of *giffuom*. (More examples on p. 41.)

The anomalies on the Kensington stone become less astonishing by such comparisons. They have not been far from the spoken language which was developing and was to be realized soon after. A purist or champion of Modern Norwegian might, about the middle of the fourteenth century, anticipate those kinds of forms in his draft for the inscription. Particularly if he was a foreigner (a German) who was to write down the language of a (Swedish) Goth or Norwegian.

Such anomalies may occur at any time, sometimes in an astonish-

¹⁸ Øverland, O. A., Norges Historie, vol. 3, p. 867, Kristiania, 1888.

¹⁹ Kleinming, G. E., Svenska Medeltidens Rimkrönikor (in 3 vols., 1865-68), vol. 1, p. 175 ff.

ing accumulation in a narrow space. We have seen a similar occurrence on the Greenland runic stone from Kingigtorsuaq (cf. pp. 7-13).

I want to repeat: what cannot a Greenland rune carver permit himself on a dangerous expedition of discovery to the Ultima Thule!

8. *at se äptir*, "TO LOOK AFTER, GUARD, SUPERINTEND (THE SHIPS)"
(see lines 10-11 of inscription)

This expression is known from Old Icelandic and may as well have belonged to the Old Swedish dialect as the above-mentioned other phrases of an old-fashioned character (*of west, äptir wi kom hem*, etc.). Cf. OIcel. *sjá eptir einu* in Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, Kristiania, 1886, e.g., *ætlu vér at eigi muni aðrir meirr eiga eptir sinum hlut at sjá* in the saga on *Vígastýr ok Heiðarvígum* (and many other examples).

9. *dagh rise*, "DAY'S JOURNEY" (see line 11 of inscription)

14 *dagh rise*, "day's journeys," from the "coast of the ocean" is a somewhat elastic concept, particularly considering the times in question—*rise* was a new word. The travelers had no telemeters; the regions through which they were traveling were quite unknown to them. They may have carried a calendar with them and been able to check the days and dates. Note that, in sharp contrast to the Kingigtorsuaq stone, the Kensington stone does not give any calendar reckoned date.

Fourteen days gives only an approximation, just as we say "a fortnight." It must have meant from the nearest seashore.

"The ocean" need not be a scientific term, either. "Our ships by the sea" may have been intended to refer to the nearest shore of Lake Superior or Lake Winnipeg, or perhaps to the mouth of the Nelson River in Hudson Bay. If the men had passed the Niagara on their expedition they would have had to build new ships (or boats) above the falls. It would have been easy for them to build ships. Perhaps the "*hafsvælg*" of the old geographers is the "falls" where "the ocean washes the threshold of the earth," to use another medieval term.²⁰

²⁰ Cf. Franciscus Irenicus, *Germaniae exegeseos volumina*, p. 200, Hagenau, 1518; Jos. Fischer, *Die Entdeckungen der Normannen in Amerika*, Freiburg, 1902; *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, vol. 3.

10. THE STYLE

Explaining and Explaining Away
Scandinavia in the Middle Ages

Pattern and correctness in language, it is true, are firmly anchored in the classical well-balanced society near court surrounded by the pursuits of peace until the penetration of the new fashions, due to the immigration of the foreigners, begins to change the mold of language.

On this *opdagelsefärd* the very ligaments of language seem to have broken. Here we trace a decomposition, a confusion, the penetration of foreign elements coupled with a counteraction, a puristic tendency and intention. I picture to myself an Old Swedish cleric recently arrived in Greenland, with tendencies toward new forms aroused in him, perhaps under the influence of a custom of language and writing found in the Norsemen's settlements in Greenland which was strange to him. The expedition must have passed the Norse settlements in Greenland and perhaps the men there learned something new. The Swedish cleric, among other things, must have learned to know the Greenlandic runic custom and have had a fresh recollection of his new knowledge in inland Minnesota. Powell Knutsson's expedition may have been accompanied by a man from Greenland acquainted with the localities, who was to act as pilot on the voyage to Vinland, and a Norse-Greenlandic cleric. Another stimulating implement may have been a runic calendar made in Greenland. Little by little we are removed from the Norwegian-Swedish patterns.

My severe critic, the Swedish docent Sven B. F. Jansson,²¹ finds proofs of a forgery in the great number of grammatical errors in the inscription. Of course he is right: this mess from Minnesota denotes a revolt against the style of the fourteenth century in writing and language. It so greatly challenges the suspicion of all upright philologists that only a heretic can contradict them. Moreover, the learned historian Gustav Storm, in the last century, about a decade before the stone was dug up, had aroused all historians' interest in the old voyages to Vinland. About 1890 there was a romantic tune in the air—also in America as far as the lake district—a great possibility that this thrilling tune might be caught by a monomaniacal Vinland fanatic in Minnesota: "Let me arrange a practical joke in honour and to the delight of the good Swedish farmer Mr. Öhman, who shall find his own visiting-card between the lines of this runic stone which

²¹ Jansson, Sven B. F., "Runstenen" från Kensington, *Nordisk Tidskrift* (Letterstedtska), Stockholm, 1949.

I secretly bury on the outskirts of his fields, under the ground among the roots of the tree!" *öhr ahr* 1362, left anonymously.

Rogues have existed at all times. From the fifteenth century we know the Dane Claudius Clavus (from Funen, born 1388), who put fictional names at all rivers and headlands on his Ptolemaic map of the North, even along the coasts of Greenland, where he had never been.²² The Kensington rogue was a century ahead of the Dane. The stone had stood and had tumbled into the soil of Minnesota 500 years before this last rogue was exposed by a Swede!

II. MEDIEVAL SWEDISH-NORWEGIAN MIXED LANGUAGE

On the decay of the language in Norway-Sweden about 1330-1350, P.A. Munch wrote at two places in *Det norske folks historie, Unionsperioden, II Anden Hovedafdeling, 1862*. The following is an extract from that work (pp. 362-364).²³

But directly Queen Euphemia²⁴ had begun to spurn the Norwegian translation and instead encouraged French translations of the fashionable literature of the time, e.g., the Norman-French adaptations of the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, this kind of literature seems particularly to have become the fashion, an end to which the union with Sweden also contributed. From this time we may take it for granted that Swedish or a *mixture of Swedish and Norwegian* became the language of the court, which again had an unfavorable effect on the purity of the language in general, of which much evidence is extant in many public papers of the time (e.g., *bondomen* for *böndunum*, *lagomen* for *lögnum*)²⁵ . . . Among the books which in 1340, according to an inventory, were found in the Castle of Båghus [now *Båhus*], there were, besides a good number of Swedish books, also some German books, the Swedish translation of Iwan and Gawian arranged for by Queen Euphemia, a German Bible and lawbook . . . With the sinking interest in the old national literature and in the occupation with standard native language the latter lost its purity . . . and now was written more slovenly . . . the fixed rules were disregarded. The dialects asserted themselves . . . we find in letters and literature the popular speech ("Almuesprog") itself instead of cultivated and well-arranged written language, although with some exceptions in the official documents proper.

²² Claudius Clavus (Claus Claussøn Swart) [the first cartographer of Scandinavia]. A monograph by A. Bjørnbo and Carl S. Petersen, Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, ser. 6, vol. 6, 1904, København.

²³ Cf. also Holand, Hjalmar R., *The Kensington Stone*, pp. 98-103, 1932; Westward from Vinland, pp. 152-158, 1940.

²⁴ Euphemia, the Queen of Håkon V (1299-1319).

²⁵ Many more examples of similar "wrong" dative-plural forms are found in Swedish *Medeltids-Postillor* (Samlingar ed. by Sv. Fornskrift Sällsk.), vol. 5, 1909-10, e.g., p. 248: *foräldroman*, *änglachoroman*, *kennesvænommen*, *scriptamaloman*. There is also another example of the dative ending in *y*: *illy* instead of *illi* (*illu*).

Again, later in his work, P. A. Munch has some pages (596-599) about the mixing and decay of standards. His presentation really ought to be translated and added here because it so marvelously falls in with the amazing character of the idiom on the Kensington stone. It would explain a good many of the anomalies of its grammar. Add to this that no other has been more familiar with the documents and letters extant from that period in Norway and Sweden than that great Norwegian historian and philologist.

12. OLD SWEDISH AS A HYPOTHETICAL PROBLEM

Prof. Axel Kock (whose works of 1882-1886 and 1906-1929 have been used in what precedes) was a specialist on Swedish dialects, both those of the Middle Ages and those still current. Ad. Noreen stood beside him in these studies (cf. here p. 26, Noreen's *Dalska runinskrifter*, 1906). Kock uncovered a number of medieval dialects in the provinces of the Goths and the Svear and could demonstrate the occurrence of dialects now extinct.

In Noreen's work on the Dalecarlian runes these are considered a survival of a number of medieval popular runic systems once occurring also in other Swedish provinces (Härjedalen, etc.), but most of them now extinct; only the system of Dalarne being preserved. Both the runes and the language of the Kensington inscription are to a certain degree different from all this. Hence it is excluded that a forger, if the inscription is a fabrication, should have been a man from the province of Dalarne. The same is true of his dialect (cf. here p. 27).

A faker from before 1898 might, but only through Axel Kock's works, have obtained a detailed knowledge of the vocalism of the Old Swedish words in the inscription as analyzed here (pp. 29-32; cf. pp. 43 and 53). But he could not possibly have known Kock's manuscripts of the works then not published. And it is not very likely that he should have had information sent to Minnesota from the author's (Kock's) own intimate circle of scholars.

It is evident that the idiom of the Kensington inscription is not at all a modern one but old-fashioned. It contains twice the old dative form *þeno*, which a faker would not have invented; likewise the old-fashioned *illu* from the nominative *illa*. And how should the scribe have hit the right nuances of the Old-Swedish vowels without having been quite familiar with these forms from his own natural language: *Göter* instead of *Götar*; *op* (not *up*), *ve(d)* (not *vid*), *skip* (not *skepp*), *ar* (not *år*). Also, a form like his *aptir* instead of New Swedish *efter* is markedly OSw.

Conclusion: the spelling of the inscription, perhaps even the wording of it, must be due to a man who himself spoke an Old Swedish dialect as his mother tongue, probably an extinct and to us hitherto unknown dialect.

13. A FINAL COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS

As already pointed out, there are certain points of resemblance between the two inscriptions.

Finnur Jónsson in the annual of Det Grønlandske Selskab, 1914 (pp. 94-97), raised the question with reference to the Kingigtorsuaq stone, whether (or not) it is a fraud (cf. above, pp. 6-7). He came to the same conclusion as do all other interpreters: the stone is genuine—there is no cogent reason to doubt the authenticity of this (the Greenlandic) inscription.

As a suspicious circumstance it is mentioned that C. A. Stephensen, who was a manager of the northern Upernavik district, where a native Greenlander found the stone on the ground beside the cairn, was himself an Iclander by birth and that the names of the Icelandic men mentioned on the stone as members of the expedition are rendered (spelled) in conformity with modern Icelandic pronunciation (cf. above, p. 10), a remarkable feature in an inscription dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century. In order to exclude the suspicion, similar reasons must be adduced as in the case of the Kensington inscription: how could a modern forger, who would appear to have a good knowledge of the old language and the runes, make a fool of himself to such a degree, if he really wanted to gain credence? Finnur Jónsson took great pains to prove that Stephensen, the Iclander, would have been unable to play such a sophisticated joke: that of carving quite modern names in an inscription which otherwise closely resembled the ancient language. "This suspicion must be flatly rejected."

There are some few graphic points of resemblance between the two runic inscriptions.

An ö-like rune combining *o* and *e* is found on both (pp. 12 and 26; cf. p. 44).

The strange *b*-rune (𐌛) of the Kensington stone approaches the Greenlandic *b* (𐌛) occurring four times in different places in the Western Settlement. Here, e.g., it reads in runes: *Ave Maria grasia blna* (i.e., *plena*), misspelling with *b* (the -rune).²⁶ And there are

²⁶ See Moltke, E., Greenland runic inscriptions, Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. 88, p. 225, 1936, Sandnes inscription 2, notes 1 and 2.

two other runes which the Minnesota and Greenland stones have in common, the reversed *k*²⁷ and the *ᚷ* used for *p*. These agreements might indicate that the carver of the Kensington runes has been influenced by some peculiar Greenlandic forms of style. Therefore it is thinkable, in fact credible, that he has passed via Greenland to Minnesota.²⁸

As regards the contents, the comparison is also interesting: two or three of the runic inscriptions of Greenland show similar magic spells connected with the holy name of the Virgin Mary. And both inscriptions have a definite dating: the Greenlandic stone both year and day, the Kensington stone at any rate a definite year.

The differences, however, are apparent: (1) The Minnesota stone is without any magic sign—even though the Latin letters *AVM* look like a kind of magic (a spell) in the middle of the realistic report. The Kingigtorsuaq stone is full of secret runes (also “ligatures,” or “knitted” ones, i.e., two runic letters united on one staff), and it contains plenty of mystical exorcising, numerical magic (cf. Magnus Olsen). (2) The former bears a personal stamp by its repeated “we,” the pointing out of a lesser number of Goths and another but major of Norwegians—but without giving one personal name. The latter mentions three persons by their full names, but in the third person, impersonally.

Both stones are connected with a dangerous expedition of discovery via South Greenland to Ultima Thule, or to Vinland, with the explorers in a fateful situation. Both are among the most dramatic runic inscriptions ever known.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 228, Sandnes 9, note 2.

²⁸ Cf. my *Runeindskrifter i Grønland*, 1949; also above, pp. 16 and 62 (cf. pp. 57-58).

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