

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

REPORT ON THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT  
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

The following report has been received from Dr. Homer L. Knight, Head of the History Department, Oklahoma State University:

## REPORT

The History Department of Oklahoma State University announces the following activities and staff changes effective with the autumn semester of 1970: Michael M. Smith, instructor in history at Texas Christian University, became assistant professor of Latin-American history; Douglas D. Hale and H. James Henderson were promoted to professor; Charles M. Dollar and John A. Sylvester were promoted to associate professor; Bernard W. Eissenstat, who served as director during the summer of the institute on communism and other radical movements at Oklahoma State University and the workshop on communism at Northern Arizona University, resumed his duties as associate professor of Russian history; Charles W. Harris, part time instructor, became instructor in history in Tulsa Junior College; Wayne Metz, part-time instructor, was awarded the James Mills Fellowship for graduate study in the Episcopal Church Archives located at the Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas.

## NOTES ON THE HEAVENER RUNESTONE

The following notes on the "Heavener Runestone" inscription are by Gloria Farley in reply to Dr. Robert E. Bell's statements that appeared in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, winter number 1969-1970, (Vol. XLVII), titled "Comments on the Heavener Stone Carvings" under Notes and Documents, pp. 447-49. Dr. Bell's statements are in disagreement with Mrs. Farley's findings that would prove the inscription carved on the great stone standing on Poteau Mountain, near Heavener, is of Viking origin. Dr. Bell read his statements at a State Anthropological Society meeting at Wilburton, Oklahoma, on November 1, 1969, immediately following the oral presentation by Mrs. Farley, on the subject "Norsemen in Oklahoma." Mrs. Farley's notes here on the subject of the "Heavener Runestone Carvings," give Dr. Bell's statements, each followed by her own presentation of "Fact":

*The Heavener Runestone Carvings*

*Statement:* "It is my personal opinion that the carvings were made in modern times, probably within the last hundred years or more."

*Fact:* Such claims should scientifically be based on evidence and not on the personal opinion of anyone. Dr. Bell is a noted archeologist, but is not a runologist nor a cryptographer. When asked to share the basis for his opinions, he declined.

*Statement:* "There are individuals who believe that the Heavener carvings were made by Vikings who somehow wandered into eastern Oklahoma centuries ago. Why do people support these irrational ideas? Aside from possible personal profit or promotional schemes, they do so because they want to believe them to be true."

*Fact:* My belief in the fact that Norsemen were indeed in Oklahoma in the eleventh century is based on evidence and not on wishful thinking. It would be very pleasant to be able to make a financial profit from 22 years devoted to research on this subject, but so far this is not true, as I have spent more than a thousand dollars in the research, and have received only a twenty dollar donation. I am very grateful that the State Parks Board saw fit to make the site into a State Park, based on my research. I do not think a State Park would be considered a promotional scheme.

*Statement:* "The view that the Vikings came up the Arkansas River in the eleventh century to carve their mark upon Poteau Mountain is equally imaginary."

*Fact:* Besides the evidence of the Heavener Runestone, there are seven other evidences that the Norse traveled the Arkansas River in the eleventh century; publication rights reserved.

*Statement:* "The carvings have been examined by Dr. W. E. Ham of the Oklahoma Geological Survey, who concludes that there is no geological evidence to indicate when the carvings were made, that they could have been done less than 100 years ago, or more than 5000 years ago."

*Fact:* Dr. Ham did state this. But this is only a part of his statement. I quote from a letter from Dr. Ham dated January 18, 1960, "The stone is firmly indurated with silica cement, and is so tough that it can be broken by a geologists' hammer only with considerable difficulty. Once engraved, the characters might remain virtually unchanged for hundreds of years, for the well cemented sandstone rock is weathered slowly and is dissolved hardly at all by chemical action. Judging from this evidence, it is not impossible that the cutting was done a thousand years ago."

A letter from Mr. George H. Shirk, President of the Oklahoma Historical Society, dated June 8, 1964, states "I have again discussed the matter with Mrs. Frizzell (Mildred Frizzell, geologist who examined the stone) and she said that from the point

of view of a geologist, there is nothing that would preclude the inscription having been made from 1100 to 1600 years ago."

A letter from Mr. Arnold Buzzalini, geologist and President of the Tulsa Archeological Society, to me, dated February 23, 1970; "As you know, most of the thin clay pottery found in your area and dated by the archeologists who have studied this region, has been benefited by carbon dating. Why should a fragile piece of pottery remain secure from complete weathering when buried in the loamy soil of this region for a thousand years or more? In terms of weathering geologically, a deeply scribed mark made on the dense McAlester sandstone has a much better chance of survival than the shallow fingernail mark or print on a small piece of poorly fired clay pot."

Mr. Frederick J. Pohl, on page 48 of his book, "Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus" states, "The grooves on (Heavener) cemetery gravestones 80 to 100 years old still retain edges that feel sharp to the thumb, and so do 250 year old grooves on sandstones in Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, Virginia, while the edges of the grooves in the Heavener Runestone have been weathered to comparative roundness, and therefore must be of very great age."

The location of the Heavener Runestone protects the inscription from any wind erosion, and its vertical position protects it from ice erosion.

*Statement:* "The carvings cut into the sandstone include eight symbols or letters of two runic alphabets derived from widely separated time periods. Such mixing of the runes is not known in antiquity, even in Scandinavia—"

*Fact:* The first part of this statement is correct. The inscription includes six runes from the Old Norse futhork of 24 runes, beginning in 300 A.D. or before, and two runes from the later Scandinavian futhork of 16 runes, which was used beginning about 800 A. D.

The mixture of the two alphabets was certainly used in antiquity in Scandinavia, as shown in seven photographs of runic inscription in Wolfgang Krause "Runeninschriften im alteren futhork," 1937, and in five examples found in "Handbook of the Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England" by Dr. George Stephens, 1884. Detailed drawings of the famous Rok stone (pp. 32-35) from East Gotland, Sweden, thirteen feet high, dated 800-900 A.D., show that it is carved with 770 runes from both alphabets. On page 44 is the Osby Stone dated 1000-1100, and on page 45 is the Ingelstad stone dated 1200-1300, both from East Gotland, Sweden. On page 99 is the Helnaes Stone, Fyn, Denmark, dated 750-800 A.D., and on page 106 a Priest's Sacramental Cup made of silver, buried on the breast of a corpse

found in the graveyard of Tommerup, Sealand, Denmark, dated about 1227 A.D. All these contain runes from both alphabets in question.

*Statement:* "As to what is meant by the runes—this depends upon whom you ask."

*Fact:* Of the five translations mentioned by Dr. Bell, only two are by authorities and only one is correct. The suggestion that the inscription might be the name, G. Nomedal, came from Aslak Liestol, runologist of Universitets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, Norway. He is supported in this translation by Mrs. Birgitta Linderoth Wallace, archeologist of Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa. But both these learned people, in order to obtain this transliteration, have altered the true shape of the deeply carved and plain runes. They are assuming that the second rune is unfinished and the last rune retrograde or backward, which would classify them in the same runic alphabet with the other six runes. Such is not the case. The second and last runes are perfect, and are from the latter alphabet. The transliteration is not G N O M E D A L, but G A O M E D A T.

*Statement:* "Many suggestions have been made other than the Vikings—they were made by the Indians and are a kind of pictographic writing; they represent branding iron designs from early pioneer days; they were carved by the Boy Scouts to indicate the patrol name in secret code; they were carved by a wandering Swede or Norwegian to mark his visit like "Kilroy Was Here."

*Fact:* Determined to be thorough in my research, I had in previous years followed through on all these suggestions, plus more.

Miss Muriel Wright, authority on Indian history in the state and Editor of *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, stated at my home on September 30, 1959, that the inscription is not Indian. A report on The Heavener Runestone by President George Shirk in the Autumn, 1959, *The Chronicles*, page 367, states, "Indian (Five Tribes), not believed possible. Does not correspond in any way with the Cherokee or other alphabets. Indian (prior to removals), not believed possible. Indigenous tribes had no knowledge of such things, and inscriptions of such peoples are of the pictograph type and are not linear." The inscription was submitted by me to the Summer Institute of Linguistics at Oklahoma University in 1953, and was studied by members of the Kiowa, Choctaw, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Cherokee tribes. A reply from Ben Elson stated that none recognized it.

Cattle brands? The runologists all agree that the Heavener

symbols are indeed runes, the question was when was the inscription made. Some bindrunes, or combinations of runes, do resemble some cattle brands, but there are no bindrunes on the Heavener inscription.

Boy Scouts? Dr. Bell was under the impression that he had been told by a former Boy Scout of Heavener, Glen Bordwell, that the Scouts had carved the runes. I quote from a letter from Mr. Bordwell dated February 9, 1959, to me, "As I recall Indian Rock (the former local name for the Heavener Runestone), it stood on edge, higher than I could reach, 25 to 50 feet out from an overhanging cliff. All of the symbols were on the face which looked toward the west. We scraped the moss from some of the characters on Indian Rock." Mr. Bordwell stated that the scouts did cut some symbols on another stone behind and above the Heavener Runestone, but we have been unable to find it.

If made by a "wandering Swede or Norwegian," then the same man also wandered to three other widely separated sites in two states, evidence to be published later. The composer of the Heavener inscription was very likely a Benedictine monk who accompanied the Norse colonizing party of Thorfinn Karlsefni, who landed on the Atlantic coast in the early part of the eleventh century.

*Statement:* (concerning when the runes were carved) "There are some personal statements based upon recollections by individuals who claim to have seen the carvings 30 or 40 years ago."

*Fact:* I have many signed statements, witnessed oral statements, and conversations recorded on tape from people who saw the carving 60 to 70 years ago. I have two reports that the Choc-taws saw the carvings in the 1830s.

*Statement:* "It is equally possible to obtain personal recollections from other individuals who claim they were not there at that time."

*Fact:* During 22 years of research, I have never heard a single claim that the carving was not on the stone when it was first seen. I asked Dr. Bell for the name of the person who made this claim. He admitted that he was talking about a carved stone in another part of the state, and not about the Heavener Runestone at all.

*Statement:* "We have no satisfactory evidence to settle this matter (when the runes were carved). Reputable rune scholars who have been questioned scoff at any possibility that the Heavener Runes could be genuine and ancient."

*Fact:* We know exactly when the runes were carved, even

the day the carving was begun, the "day of dedication." It was November 11, 1012. This is the correct translation of the Heavener Runestone inscription, this date only. It is true that some reputable runologists scoffed, because we and they also were basing the transliteration on the assumption that the runes represented letters and words, so did not make sense. Such is not the case. The runes do not represent letters, but numbers, according to their places in the alphabets. It seems that we were asking the wrong authorities, as the translation does not fall in the field of runology or linguistics, but in the field of cryptography and mathematics.

The correct solution was given by a cryptographer, Mr. Alf Monge, who found that the inscription is a very clever cryptopuzzle written in runic numbers. The mixture of the alphabets was intentional and necessary as part of the puzzle. The art of composing the runic cryptopuzzle, lost for 500 years until its rediscovery by Mr. Monge, was the intellectual pastime of the Norse medieval clergy. As a simple crossword puzzle proves itself in two ways, the Heavener inscription proves itself in eight different ways. The mathematical odds that this could just "happen" are astronomical.

Further proof lies with another runestone discovered at Po-teau, ten miles away, in 1967, which is also another runic dated cryptopuzzle: November 11, 1017, and made by the same man. The symbol used in this inscription for 17 is a very rare form used in the Medieval Easter Table as a rati number for line 17, and is not shown in ordinary encyclopedias or references.

*Statement:* "To my knowledge, the only genuine runes carved on stone that have been found in the entire New World came from Greenland. The Kensington Rune Stone from Minnesota is known to be a fraud; the Beardmore hoard of Viking relics is apparently a planned hoax; the Newport Tower is early Colonial period rather than Viking."

*Fact:* The phrase "to my knowledge" is quite a loophole. There are few runestones in Greenland, but many genuine runestones in America that apparently he does not know about. It is true that a controversy has raged since 1898 about the authenticity of the Kensington Runestone. I have a list of 46 publications and opinions on this subject, both pro and con. However, Mr. Monge was also able to provide indisputable evidence that it is genuine. Also a cryptopuzzle, it secretly verifies the visual date of 1362 which it bears, and also contains two acrostics in runes which translate, "Harrek made me" and "Tollik cut me." The farmer who found the runestone, accused of composing the already intricate inscription, would have been incapable of this. Also the tree roots which were wrapped around the stone so tight-

ly that the wood bore the impression of the carved runes, existed for many years, and were examined by witnesses.

The Beardmore (Ontario) Relics have been neither proved nor disproved, as the evidence was unfortunately clouded by personal envy and controversy, and now can probably never be settled.

The Newport Tower in Rhode Island is definitely a Norse stone structure. Mr. Frederick J. Pohl in his book "Atlantic Crossing Before Columbus" stated that the evidence that it is pre-Colonial exists in a document among the Colonial papers in the Public Records office in London. Newport was not founded until 1639. The "rownd stone towre" was listed in 1632 as "a commodity of the land" on a survey for a proposed colony. Mr. Pohl also personally found that every linear measurement in the tower is an exact unit in Norse measurements, but fractional in English measurements. The clincher is the fact that a runestone, which is another cryptopuzzle dated 1116, is built into the tower, as published in "Norse Medieval Cryptography in Runic Carvings" by Alf Monge and Dr. O. G. Landsverk.

*Statement:* "The only Viking remains currently established for North America appears to be the site of L'Anse aux Meadows at the tip of northern Newfoundland."

*Fact:* "Appears" is correct. Readers are invited to watch for a book on the Norse in America rapidly approaching the final manuscript form by Alf Monge, Mr. Earl Syversen, and this author.

—Gloria Farley