

The Wotan Gene, or Why Some Cherokees Have Blond Hair and Blue Eyes

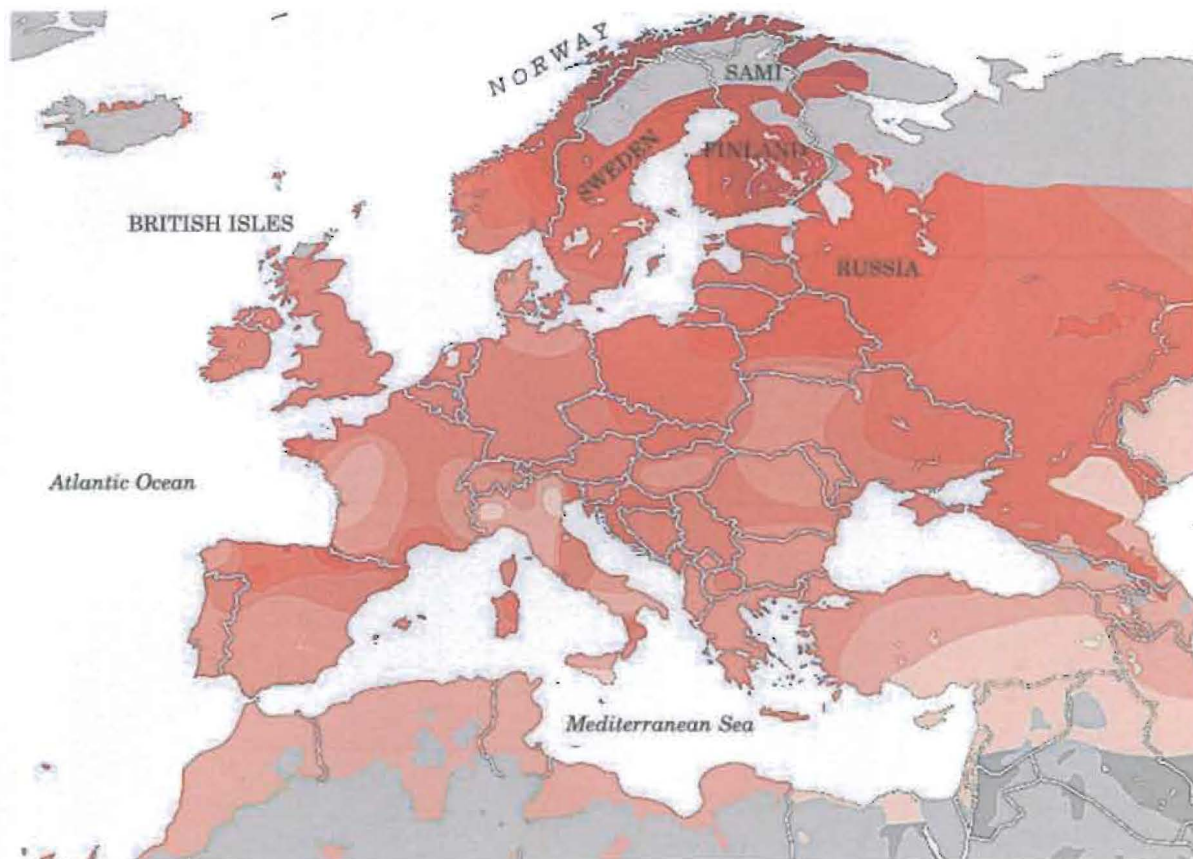
All generalities are false, including this one. –Voltaire

Donald Yates

ABSTRACT: In this discussion paper, we consider the U haplotypes from Phase III of DNA Consultants' Cherokee DNA Project. This draft corresponds to what will become Chapter 5 of a forthcoming book titled *Cherokee DNA Studies II: More Real People Who Proved the Geneticists Wrong*. Phases I and II of the same project were covered by the volume titled [*Cherokee DNA Studies: Real People Who Proved the Geneticists Wrong*](#), by Donald N. Yates and Teresa A. Yates (Longmont, Colorado: Panther's Lodge Publishers), published in 2014. In the present piece, we propose that many of the U's, particularly the U5's, have an ancient Scandinavian origin. Participants' mitochondrial lines and precise mutations arose in the extreme north of Europe thousands of years ago and sometime in the intervening millennia, in more than one event certainly, came by water to North America, eventually blending with the indigenous people already present and becoming part of the swirling, shifting masses of "Indians."

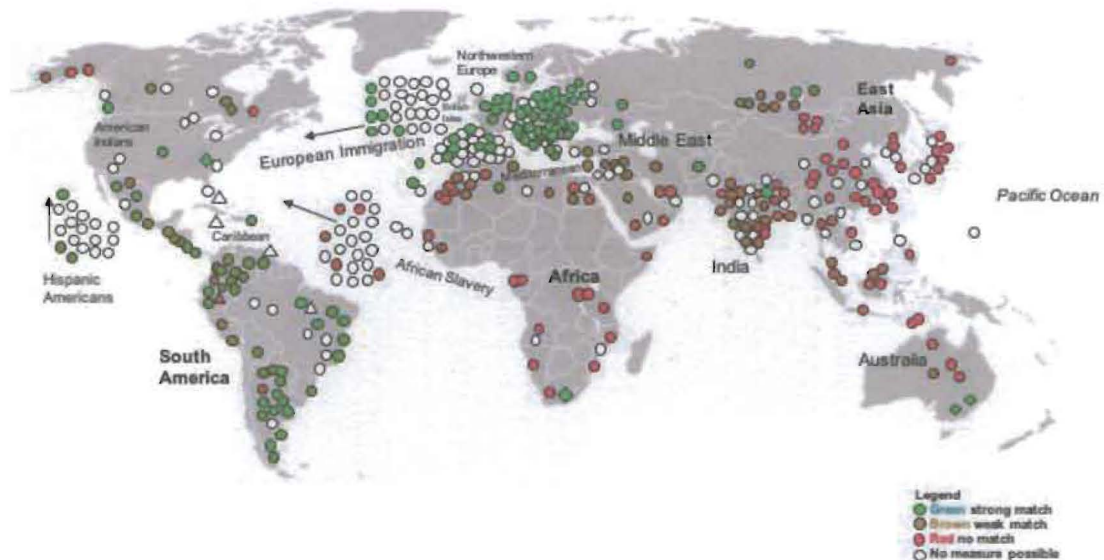
We must emphasize at the outset something that may seem obvious. No one in the past *knew* what their haplogroup was, technically speaking. The ancients did not form social groups on that basis. They did not have voluntary associations like the Haplogroup U Discussion Board. Prior concepts were centered around notions like kinship, clan and tribe. Hence, when we find haplotype matches today they are evidence of shared secret origins, a hidden continuum, not a real official history with authors, editors and readers. The names are all artificial and illusory. Linking ethnonyms to genes, just like equating linguistic developments with demographic change, is always tendentious. The debate on whether the Neolithic Revolution of agriculture and town life was spread to Europe more by migration of Middle Easterners or by cultural adoption is an example. We will confine our arguments in this chapter to genetics.

Let us begin with participants who had haplogroup U5. In remote times, U5 was the most common maternal lineage among European hunter-gatherers, notably in the Sami people and others of northern climes who either did not or could not adapt to agricultural ways of life. U5 is absent from Southwest Asia and very low in most of the Middle East. Ancient DNA samples show us that U was more prevalent and indeed dominant in Europe in earlier times. The majority of ancient Latvian skeletons, including those from the Bronze Age hillfort site of Kivutkalns, are U4 and U5.¹ The people of Kivutkalns like others in the North clung to the old ways of a hunter-gatherer society even in the Bronze Age between 230 and 810 BCE.



High frequencies of Haplogroup U5 in Europe according to Eupedia. The same source asserts that one-fifth of Finns and all Sami belong to U5. "Other high frequencies are observed among the Mordovians (16%), the Chuvash (14.5%) and the Tatars (10.5%) in the Volga-Ural region of Russia, the Estonians (13%), the Lithuanians (11.5%) and the Latvians in the Baltic, the Dargins (13.5%), Avars (13%) and the Chechens (10%) in the Northeast Caucasus, the Basques (12%), the Cantabrians (11%) and the Catalans (10%) in northern Spain, the Bretons (10.5%) in France, the Sardinians (10%) in Italy, the Slovaks (11%), the Croatians (10.5%), the Poles (10%), the Czechs (10%), the Ukrainians (10%) and the Slavic Russians (10%," claims Eupedia.

The Wotan Gene



In terms of autosomal DNA instead of mitochondrial haplogroups, the distribution of ancient European hunter-gatherer genes surviving today can be summarized in a map of what we might call the “Wotan gene.” This is defined by a distinct, virtually non-mutating STR (short tandem repeat) number at the locus THO1. Leading populations reporting this forensic value are Swedish, Belarusian, Flemish, Dutch, Melungeon, Norwegian, Maltese, Slovaks, Caucasus, Polish and German.

Wotan, or Odin, sometimes Voden, Woden, Votan or Wuotan, means “furious, inspired, mad” in its Indo-European derivation. Germanic kings traced their genealogy to the hero-god in a fashion called euhemeristic much as we say we are descendants of Adam or Achilles or Brutus. It is a claim of ethnicity. Could the Cherokee Paint Clan, called Ani-Wodi, conventionally taken to designate the Phoenicians, really mean Those Descended from Wotan? If so, Kutans are the people from the East Mediterranean (Kittim) and the Paint Clan are Germanic interlopers. The distinction, however, is blurred if you believe, like Christine Pellech and others, that the Phoenicians were originally a North European people.²

In support of Wodi (pronounced Wo-tee) in Cherokee being cognate with Wotan in Northern European languages, we might point out that though Ani-Wodi is translated Paint People, *wodi* does not seem to *mean* paint. For paint and dye, the words *asuwiska* and *disuwisti* are used.³ Wodi appears only in the name of the Paint Clan and does not even seem to be from a Cherokee root.

The Wotan Gene could just as well be viewed as a Caucasian or “white” marker. It is minimally present in Africa, rare in Asia. In South Africa, 40.3% of whites have it, as against only 1.0% of blacks. In Norway it has a frequency of 34.7% and in Sweden 35.9%, twice the worldwide average but about the same statistically as Cherokees (33.3% for Enrolled, 36.3% for

Admixed), Melungeons (35.0%) and the U.S. white population at large (36.8%). Among American Indian groups, it occurs in California's Miwok Indians at the rate of 34.9%, in Creek or Muskogean Indians at 25% and in Mexico's Nahuatl-speaking Huichols at about the same percentage.

Among the 15 U's in Phase III, most are U5, and most of them have autosomal profiles with the Wotan Gene received from one or two parents. A double dose of the Wotan Gene occurs in the profile of Marcy Barrington (#3.56, T09554). Her mitochondrial line goes back to Julia Ann Williams, born in 1838 in Missouri (and probably before that to a Southeastern tribe). Her extremely rare form of U1a matches only a Mary Miller born in 1836 in Missouri, Asenda Rednvaldsen of Norway and Boris Ritter of Germany. U1 considered as a whole is a very minor haplogroup. It is most commonly reported in Scandinavia, up and down the U.S. East Coast and in Missouri. These mitochondrial findings would seem to indicate very dramatically that an ancient Scandinavian type crossed the ocean and has a branch among the American Indians—unless, that is, Mary Miller and Julia Ann Williams shared a mitochondrial DNA line that went back to Norwegian or German immigrants. Barrington also shows autosomal matches to South American Indians: Belem Amazonians (#44), Colombian Andeans, Amazonians and Orinoquians (#77) and Ecuadorian Kichwas (#78).

Sidney Patrick Hooks is our next case. The multifaceted Oklahoma resident can be described as author, horseman, cattleman, teacher of primitive skills, Biblical scholar, journeymen and musician, although these labels hardly do him justice. His decades-long passion for the horse and study of horsemanship led to the book titled *101 Ranch Horse Tips*. This publication, along with his work with youth, brought him to the attention of tribal elders throughout the U.S. and Canada. It is no exaggeration to say Hooks has been at ground level for returning horse culture back to the Cherokee, Choctaw, Sioux and other tribes.

Says Hooks:

One of my fellow Echota Cherokee Tribal members is Dr. Yvette Collin. She is also a tribal member and Ambassador for the Lakota Nation, Pine Ridge, South Dakota. In short, there has been an exhausting amount of work placed into the work and preservation of ancient Horses of the Americas, not only by our method of training but an ongoing in-depth scientific study of the horses origins and their particular tribal affiliations before Columbus. This research is currently being carried out in France with a DNA study from accumulated horse DNA throughout the world.⁴

Hooks has a very rare haplogroup, U3, and equally rare haplotype. In the survey of founder types by Richards and Macaulay it has but one broad match, Scandinavia. The Cherokee man, however, had 13 exact matches in Mitosearch, 5 to unknown origins, 2 to Cherokee families in Alabama and South Carolina, the rest British Isles.

Hooks traces his mother's female line back to a "full blood Cherokee," as she was described in newspapers of the day. She was a notable figure in the Between the Rivers region of Kentucky, where Hooks says "all our bunch on both sides have lived for six or seven generations at a minimum." The line goes like this:

Sidney Patrick Hooks, b. 1958

Mother: Ruth Vaughn Dunnagan, b. Jan. 9, 1922

Grandmother: Nina Gertrude Taylor, b. Jan. 8, 1881

Great-Grandmother: Melissa Isabelle Huggins, b. 1845

Great-great-Grandmother: Elizabeth Ann "Annie" McQuade, b. Aug. 14, 1824, d. Jan. 8, 1896.

Elizabeth Ann McQuade was born in Hopkins County, Kentucky, the daughter of Robert McQuade (1787-1840), and married Josiah "Silas" Huggins (1820-1853). After his death she married Joe Ferguson. She is listed as E. A. Fergusson, widow, on the U.S. Census of 1880 for Christian County, Kentucky. Annie's mother is unknown but on this census record is indicated as having been born in Virginia.



Pat Hooks, participant No. 7, identifies as White and American Indian.



Pat Hooks' Cherokee ancestor, Annie McQuade.

A fascinating part of Hooks' record is his ancestor's match to Mary Polly Hale, said to be a Creek Indian. Her mother was Hannah Hale (1765-1818). Hannah was a famous captive from the white settlements on the Ogeechee River in Georgia, now Taliaferro County. She was carried off to Creek country in a raid on the British fort in 1777. This act was conducted by Hopoie Harjo, or Far off Warrior, and his father Mad Dog, chief of Tuckabatchee. They took the 11-year-old child back to the town known as Fish Ponds in Alabama, where she married a Creek Indian and had a family.⁵

Patrick Hook's match to enrolled Cherokees from North Carolina (n=33) was high on his autosomal report (no. 12). North Asian, a population very similar to American Indian, was his no. 2 megapopulation. Norwegian appears as his no. 48 population in his top 50, although his

genealogy contains no Norwegian immigrants or vestiges of Scandinavian culture to his knowledge.

U4 and U5 Haplotypes

Next is a U4, another minor U type. Participant 3.12 is one of three U4s in the project overall. We don't know the descendant's genealogy in detail very far back, only that she claims Cherokee. Her no. 1 autosomal match is Ecuadorian Kichwas (n=115), South American is her no. 2 metapopulation, and Andean is no. 5. American Indian is the no. 2 megapopulation.

Another U4 (K2076) is Robin Hughes Kelly, who lives in North Carolina and shows a "double dose" of the Wotan Gene. He has an extensive genealogy going back in part to the 1600s and even earlier. One of the family mysteries he was hoping to solve was a rumored connection to Nancy Ward through his ancestress Keziah Ward of Burke County, North Carolina. His no. 1 autosomal match was Michigan Native Americans, and American Indian was his no. 8 megapopulation. In the Euro section, Kelly's no. 1 country was Estonia, a match, along with Finland, that is common with Americans of Indian descent. The phenomenon used to be thought "anomalous" or attributed to statistical noise or meaningless "convergence."

One U5a specimen, participant 25, exhibits an exceedingly rare haplotype, with half the matches reported of unknown origin. We do not know her genealogy, but she took the Cherokee and Rare Genes from History tests. On the latter, she received the Lake Baikal and Amerind genes. On the former, her no. 1 autosomal match was Norwegian, her no. 2 Swedish and no. 61 Admixed Cherokee (n=62). Her no. 1 megapopulation was Jewish.

Similarly, participant 46 (I4952), has a unique U5a haplotype, also a double hit of the Wotan Gene as well as Cherokee matches.

The remaining U haplogroup participants in Phase III are all U5b's, the most familiar subclade. B1246 (no. 20) had a handful of full matches to her rare haplotype. On an autosomal basis, she showed American Indian as her no. 2 megapopulation, Michigan Native Americans as her no. 1 and Norway as her no. 7 match worldwide, in addition to a strong South American Indian picture.

Kristine Dupuis (3.5, D3500) lives in Iron Mountain, Michigan. Her U5b haplotype matches only one person in the world according to available databases, and that is Marie Bernatchez of Gaspe, Canada. High autosomal matches include Yupik, Inupiat, Evenk, Cherokee, Alaska Athabaskan and Saskatchewan Algonquians.

Ramona George's maternal line mutational set seems to lead back genealogically to an Irish woman, but we cannot be sure. It is rather common on both sides of the Atlantic.

Cherchez la Femme: It Must Go Back to a Woman

So we have a number of U lineages, some documented back to a Cherokee woman, some not, some ambiguous. In Phase I, we had three very clear instances of anomalous Cherokee U's, all U5a1a's, viz. (pp. 65f.):

- No. 17, a descendant of Ann Dreaweah, Cherokee, Marine City, Michigan, matching only South Carolina and Norway
- No. 19, a descendant of Jane Rose, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians tribe member, Baker Roll, matching Marie Eastman, born in Indian Territory, 1900

- No. 20, a descendant of Clarissa Green (Ravenwolf), Cherokee Wolf Clan, N.C., b. 1846

These cases would appear to be enough to prove from mitochondrial analysis that Norwegians, including women, not just men, came to North America in remote antiquity in considerable numbers. Maybe they migrated continuously, producing many descendants over several millennia. We could dub them “pre-Viking Vikings” or *Ur-Wikinger*.

Few Scandinavians at all came to the United States before the late nineteenth century. When they did arrive they settled primarily in rural areas of the Midwest and Great Plains, predominately in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota, not in the Southern Highlands or Appalachians. States like Alabama, Georgia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi have the lowest numbers of people of Scandinavian heritage, usually less than 1.0 % of the population. Evidently, the Scandinavian signature in American Indian DNA is caused by genetic input that is very deep seated. It is not an effect of admixture or immigration post-1492.

Blondes Had More Fun

Time and again, historical accounts of the first meetings between European explorers and North American natives tell of Indians of Scandinavian appearance and heritage. Verrazano’s 1524 journal reported tall, “white natives” of the Narragansett Bay tribe of New Jersey. In 1542, French Governor De Roberval described the Iroquois as “very white, but they paint themselves for fear of heat and sunburning.” Champlain in 1604 encountered fair-skinned natives living in eastern Canada. Because of their physical features he believed they were of Nordic origin. The French priest Charlevoix observed bearded, blond-haired natives in Labrador. In 1779, George Rogers Clark encountered light-skinned, blond-haired and blue-eyed warriors on the Great Plains.

Nordic seafarers traveled as far as Central and South America. Not only did they have compasses and gnomons but a vast store of navigation knowledge and crystals capable of detecting the sun’s position on cloudy days. Thirteenth-century murals at Chichen Itza in the Yucatan Peninsula depict pale-complexioned people with blond hair being held captive in ropes by Maya warriors. In 1535, Peruvians called the invading Spaniards Viracochas (divine whites) because they recalled an ancient race of white people who once lived on Lake Titicaca in Bolivia. Pizarro described Atahualpa and the ruling elite of the Incas as “whiter than the people of Spain.” According to legend, the ancient cities of the Andes were built by a race of light-skinned warriors called the Chachapoyans whose descendants still live in the jungles of the Amazon.

Twentieth-century anthropologists have studied “blond” Eskimos in Newfoundland, Labrador and Baffin Island, descendants of mixed parentage from the times of ancient Norse commerce. The Beothuks were famous for their white looks. When the Little Ice Age and plague extinguished the Norse colony on Greenland, there was a Nordic exodus to the region later known as Norumbega on the Hudson River, with profound consequences for the Abenaki, Mohawk, Mohegan and Celtic or pre-Celtic settlements in Irland Mikla (Greater Ireland). There are many words of Norse origin in the Iroquois language. Norse influence has been detected in Algonquian longhouse construction, palisades, folklore and the *wergild* laws of compensatory

justice and *althing* system of representation.⁶ Such facts just scratch the surface and can be multiplied by the hundreds.

The Uchees have sometimes been known as “the white Indians of Georgia.” Supposedly, their founders came on ships and first landed in the Bahamas. When the American painter John Trumbull sketched five Creek chiefs visiting New York in 1790, contemporaries were astounded by what they saw. The Creek leaders were said to resemble whites, not Indians. The public thought they looked like Greek gods or Roman senators.⁷

In 1815, an ancient mummy still enswathed in its wrappings was untombed on the Cumberland River near Carthage, Tennessee, not far from Castalian Springs. As described by the antiquarian John Haywood in *The Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee* in 1823, it was a young white woman. She had blond hair and wore a silver clasp on her wrist like a princess in an Anglo-Saxon or Viking ship burial.

Old maps and chronicles referred to North America’s eastern coastlands, from the mouth of the St. Lawrence Seaway to Florida and west to the Appalachians, as Vitramannaland, Land of the White Men, a term which seemed to comprehend both Norse and Irish settlements. It was also known as Albania (The White Land).

It is said that the tribes who occupied Middle America before the invasion of the Cherokee, Lenapes and Iroquois from across the Mississippi were “white people.” As many traditions have it, these Talegans were wiped out in a decisive massacre at the Falls of the Ohio.

Arlington Mallery, an engineer by profession, devoted his entire life to determining whether, and to what extent, the Vikings preceded Columbus. He uncovered evidence of Scandinavian and Irish peoples who left maps, mounds, iron furnaces and other relics from a vanished Iron Age in America. He documented hundreds of iron smelting furnaces and slag heaps, at least one of them underneath an Indian mound, the Arledge Mound in Ross County, Ohio. A Celtic-type furnace he identified on Oak Hill near Clarksville, Virginia, exactly matched one reconstructed in Västergötland, Sweden. In local historical societies and private collections, Mallery found caulking tools, boat rivets, knives, axes, scribes, saws and chisels.⁸

Mallery also compiled a long list of Old Norse and Finnish words preserved in Iroquoian languages, including Mohawk, Huron, Onandaga, Cayuga, Oneida, Tuscarora and Seneca. Some are more than striking. For instance, the word *if* in Finnish is *tokko*. In Onandaga it is *toka*, and in Mohawk, *taka*.⁹

Epigraphic Evidence

When did the first Scandinavians come to America? It could have been very early. Norse voyagers knew celestial navigation, prevailing winds and currents of the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean, weather prediction and use of bird flight patterns and feeding whales. Moreover, they were motivated by something they called restless curiosity, *aefityr*.¹⁰

Runic writing began to be used in Scandinavia about 500 BCE. It became decipherable by the layman only in the late twentieth century. One can track the spread of Scandinavians who used this alphabet by extant inscriptions. None is likely to be spurious, although their reception by academia follows the usual pattern of pursuing damage control and attempting to micro-manage history.

There are at least twenty-seven runic inscriptions in the United States and Canada, ranging from the 400-pound Fletcher stone of Yarmouth Harbor, Nova Scotia, which can be viewed in

the Yarmouth Public Library, to the large Heavener Rune Stone, reported by Gloria Farley in 1951 and preserved in the Heavener Rune Stone State Park dedicated in October 1970 in Le Flore County, Oklahoma. These are conveniently listed and critically addressed by Suzanne O. Carlson, an architect specializing in historic preservation, expert in Old Norse, medieval Latin, Greek and Scandinavian history, who is a frequent contributor to the *NEARA Journal*.¹¹

The Yarmouth stones were reported in 1875 and 1920. The first has been translated: Harko's Son Addressed the Men (p. 220). The second stone disappeared.

The Manana Inscription on an island of the Maine coast was first noticed in 1855. Fell recognized the script as runic. In a part Norse, part Celtic translation he read: Ships from Phoenicia Cargo Platform. This may or may not be accurate (p. 221).

Spirit Pond Stones, Phippsburg, Maine: a whole literature has grown up around these inscriptions. Stone # 3 is the most impressive and consists of 16 lines. Former U.S. Army cryptographer Cyrus Gordon, professor of Semitic studies at Brandeis University, deciphered it in *Riddles in History* (1974, pp. 119-44). It seems to be a metrical threnody in Old Norse related to the Black Death of the fourteenth century.

The Grave Creek Stone was reported by Schoolcraft in 1824 from a "royal burial" in a West Virginia mound. Fell took it as an Iberian inscription written in Phoenician in the first millennium BCE, but Strandwold read it as Norse and translated it: I knelt on this Island / Yule Site on Meadow Island/ Now the Island is a Sanctuary/ Where Holy Things Are Hoarded (p. 230).

One should not forget the Crow Island inscription in Nordic Tifinag script and Old Norse language on a rockface in Penobscot Bay, near Deer Isle, Maine. Tifinag was in use before runes. According to Fell, it says, "A sheltered island, where ships may lie in a harbor."¹²

The Kensington Rune Stone first came to the attention of the press and general public in 1898. Although it has been viciously attacked by disbelievers it has also been well defended by experts of all persuasions. It seems to be without much question the record of Norse explorers in Minnesota from 1362 CE.¹³

The Heavener Runestone supposedly dates from 1012 and proclaims, This is Glome's Valley (p. 233). It measures 12 feet wide and 10 feet long with eight 6-9 inch-high letters and is protected by a fence thanks to Gloria Farley's zealous efforts of preservation over many years. There are two other inscriptions associated with it, the Poteau Stone and Shawnee Stone.¹⁴

A Field Trip to Peterborough in Ontario

The foregoing could all date to no earlier than the era of Viking settlement in Greenland and Newfoundland. What about earlier contact and even colonization? One of the most telling pieces of evidence is the Peterborough Petroglyphs National Historic Site of Canada, near Woodview, Ontario. This is a huge, outspread flat limestone shelf covered with 1200 carved images and signs. Rediscovered by mining prospectors in 1954, it was cleared and cleaned and thoroughly documented by Joan Vastokas of the University of Toronto and Ron Vastokas of Trent University (*Sacred Art of the Algonkians*, 1974). There are two schools of thought about its creation and significance. The official story is that First Nations people pecked the "realistic human and animal forms, as well as numerous abstract and symbolic images" between 900 and 1400 CE with gneiss hammers to celebrate their spiritual, artistic and intellectual life. The

alternative interpretation attributes the Peterborough Petroglyphs to Scandinavian overlords who arrived in bird-prow ships and set up a permanent trading station.

Where Canadian schoolchildren are taught to see canoes, other observers recognize Norse solar boats, shapes exactly echoing hundreds of Bronze Age petroglyphs in Sweden and Norway. Where university anthropologists point to Native American chiefs with conical headdresses, shamans and totems, dissenting scholars have detected calendar priests, the Nordic figures of Thor and Loki and signs of the Zodiac. Never has there been a more radical dichotomy of opinions in archeology. One side envisages mystical signs pecked with a rock, the other party thinks alphabetic writing, calendars and measurements cut with a bronze tool.

A strong clue to the identity of the people who made those petroglyphs comes from Quackenbush, the nearest ancient settlement. One survey from the 1970s through Trent University found a mixture of Caucasian, Negroid and Amerind skulls. The later outnumbered the rest, but there were several instances of the first two types. This strongly suggests that ancient white people were involved at Peterborough, evidently in positions of leadership, while natives of the Canadian Shield Culture and black slaves that came with the white people were also living there together.

Harvard University biologist Barry Fell was the first to argue that the petroglyphs were the engraved record of a Scandinavian king's voyage to America around 1700 BCE to barter textiles with the Anishnabe Indians in return for metallic copper ingots. His name was Woden-Lithi (Slave of Wotan), he used a pre-runic writing system known as Proto-Tifinag and his home was near the head of the Oslo Fjord.¹⁵

Odin and the Odyssey

Viennese ethnologist Christine Pellech relates the Peterborough site to the legendary wanderings of Odysseus. She firmly holds that the sea voyages and geography in Homer's epic reflect Phoenician and Egyptian traditions going back in turn as much as 15,000 years. We might point out additionally that "many-wiled" Odysseus could be a literal allusion to the wizardly Odin. The character's name was understood by the Greeks to mean "hated of man and god," but this may be a folk etymology. Among Odin/Wotan's many titles and epithets are Journey Empowerer, God of Cargoes, Wise One, Concealer, The One Who Is Many, Interest Counselor (Gagnrad in the Edda), Journey Adviser, Deceiver, Swift Tricker, Wayfinder, Wanderer, Way-tame, Wayweary and Wide Famed. He is also seen as a powerful wielder of words and spells: Homer repeatedly portrays Odysseus as the most eloquent of the Greeks.

As Pellech points out, the narrative content of this epic until the twentieth century, was regarded as built on ancient story cycles that encapsulated factual knowledge of the earth. Odysseus' visits to the Lotus Eaters, Circe and the Cyclopes were based on real geography. Only in recent times were Odysseus' stopovers, routes and destinations set solely in the Mediterranean in readers' minds. Restoring the value of the work in a sort of archeo-mythological fashion, Pellech places the land of the giant man-eating sons of Poseidon, the Laestrygonians, in Norway, equates the enchantress Circe's island of Aiaia possibly with one of the Lofoten Islands and identifies the Underworld which Circe directs the hero to visit with the other side of the globe, in other words, North America.

Pellech believes that Fell is unquestionably correct in his opinions about the Tifinagh alphabet and the Sea Peoples, whom the Egyptians called the Tamahu (White People). These

are the invaders who threatened the very survival of the Egyptian empire under Ramesses III (1188-1165 BCE), were repulsed, withdrew to settle in Libya, but returned in force to rule as pharaohs and independent kings during the Libyan Dynasty.



The white-skinned, blond, blue-eyed, tall, muscular Libyan was considered the ideal of male beauty throughout antiquity, much as Scandinavian film stars like Ann-Margret, Jane Fonda and Candice Bergen are viewed as paragons of female beauty today. Shown is the North African Greek sculptor Polycleitus' much-copied Doryphorus (Spear Bearer) of 440 BCE, Cyrene.

There is a commonality of shared culture and genetics, Pellech notes, among Scandinavians, Berbers, Egyptians, Phoenicians and white people of the Far North. The latter were known to the Greeks and Romans as Hyperboreans (Those Who Live Behind the North Wind). Proof of a common origin is seen in the concentric circles or sun-symbols, the sun-wagon with horses and spoked wheels depicted in overview perspective, swastikas, horsemen, chariots, men with circular object in hand, distinctively shaped *lurer* or marching trumpets, Nordic rayed crowns, horses, hounds and, of course, the Tifinag and Ogam scripts. "On the color friezes of the ancient Egyptians," she remarks, "the Tamahu are represented with fair skin, reddish-blond hair and blue eyes."

There is a great deal of corroboration, says Pellech, that these white-skinned, blond and blue-eyed Tamahu and Lebu (Libyans) have survived the millennia right down to our own times:

Skylax, the Greek geographer and navigator (around 520 BC) says, "All Libyans are blond, of gigantic growth and the most handsome of men." Callimachus, a poet from Cyrene in Libya (around 300 BC), praises the beauty of blond Libyan women. Furthermore, there are countless reports from travelers down to our own day who have encountered blond and blue-eyed Berbers in the valleys of the Atlas Mountains. The ethnologist Leo Frobenius investigated the "blond Berber races" in the Atlas Range and recorded their legends about

how their forefathers came across the sea from the north at a very early time. He also spoke of a "deep-seated correspondence" between Berbers and Europeans in their repertory of fairy-tales.¹⁶

Recall that the Egyptian term for the Sea People is Tamahu. This name could refer to "North Sea Peoples" or "White People." It is worth asking if it had anything to do with the Tamahitans mentioned in chapter 1 of our book, where the Creek Indian word has been interpreted as Trade People or Merchants.

Central America's Votanic Empire

It would be remiss not to ask whether Woden/Wotan/Odin, the all-father god of the Scandinavians and other northern Germanic peoples, might not be the same as Votan, the "populator of America" in Maya and other Central American legends. Certainly, the ethnographer Alexander von Humboldt (1767-1835) believed the two were one and the same. Spanish antiquarians and early Americanists like Hubert Howe Bancroft (1767-1835) speak of the Votanic Age as the period that preceded the Toltec.

Stories of Votan, like the myths of Quetzalcoatl, Gucumatz, Kukulcan and others, have generally been thrown on the scrapheap of history by serious students of indigenous culture. But in the spirit of even-handedness at least let us see what reliable New World sources really had to say about Votan as a Scandinavian founder figure and culture bearer. Bancroft's statements may be taken as a good place to start:

There were several Votans...or this name was accorded to deserving men who came after him. At time he seems to be a mythic creation, the mediator between man and God, the representation of wisdom and power; at times a prince and legislator who introduced a higher culture among his people. The analogy presented by traditions between Votan, Gucumatz, Cukulcan and Quetzalcoatl would lead us to believe that one individual united in his person all these appellations. Nevertheless, a comparison of the different traditions admits of two, Votan and Quetzalcoatl, the other names having the same signification as the latter.

Bancroft takes it as a given that whether Votan was one person or a race, a hero, ruler, priest or warrior, it was from this source that "Central Americans received the culture which their successors brought to such perfection." Such an intruder from the Old World who helps natives progress and learn about civilized arts is hardly even allowed in our thinking today. The whole idea smacks of patronizing the very cultures we well, we white people have always patronized!

Continues Bancroft: "Like Quetzalcoatl, Votan was the first historian of his people, and wrote a book on the origin of the race, in which he declares himself a snake, a descendant of Imos, of the line of Chan, of the race of Chivim." Generally, in American Indian chronicles, as we have seen in the annals of the Tainos, and as is true in Hopi accounts and throughout Southwestern rock art, the Snake Clan stands for people associated with boats. The Cherokee, too, were called Chan, Boat People by other tribes. Another of Votan's titles was Lord of the

Dugout. Commentators compare his name to Odon in the Michouacan calendar and Oton, god and chief in Otomi mythology.

A footnote in Bancroft's account explains that Chan, "Snake," was the name of a tribe called Lacandones, near Palenque, known also as Colhuas, Chanes or Quinames (Giants). He cites Brasseur de Bourbourg and the Popul Vuh, saying the version used is written in the Tzeltalan language and giving some of its complicated transmission. "Cabrera," he says of one of the redactors, "thinks that Chivim refers to Tripoli, and it is the same as Hivim or Givim, the Phoenician word for snake, which, again, refers to Hivites, the descendants of Heth, son of Canaan." Thus, concludes Bancroft, the first Votan is saying, "I am a Hivite from Tripoli, from Libya."

Let us continue with Bancroft's summary. But to make it more readable let us put explanations in parentheses and combine notes with the narrative rather than segregate:

From the confused tradition of the Tzendals, as rendered by Nuñez de la Vega and Ordoñez y Aguiar, it seems that Votan proceeded by divine command to America and there portioned out the land. This is equivalent to laying the foundation for civilization. He was sent to people the continent. He accordingly departed from Valum Chivim (Tangier in Phoenicia), passed by the 'dwelling of the thirteen snakes' (Canary Islands), and arrived in Valum Votan (Island of Santo Domingo, or Hispaniola), where he took with him several of his family to form the nucleus of the settlement. With them he passed through the island-strewn Laguna de Terminos, ascended the Usumacinta, and here, on one of its tributaries founded Nachan (Place of Snakes), or Palenque. The Tzendal inhabitants bestowed upon the strange-looking newcomers the name Tzequiles, 'men with petticoats,' on account of their long robes, but soon exchanged ideas and customs with them, submitted to their rule, and gave them their daughters in marriage. This event is laid a thousand years before Christ.¹⁷

In so many words, then, about 1000 BCE, at a time when the Phoenicians were first expanding into the West Mediterranean and first venturing beyond the Pillars of Hercules, a king named Votan sailed on the Canary Current to the Caribbean, where he took on additional volunteers from other whites on Haiti, landed on the Gulf Coast of Tabasco and proceeded up the Usumacinta River to establish a colony in northeastern Guatemala called Snaketown. This is where the Maya city of Palenque was later located. Bancroft says that the Popul Vuh has Votan making four or more visits back to his home—something we also heard about the first settlers in the Taino chronicles. Once, "on returning to Palenque, Votan found that several more of his nations had arrived; these he recognized as snakes, and showed them many favors, in return for which his supremacy was made secure, and he was at last apotheosized."

We perceive from these accounts that Phoenician colonies in America were multi-ethnic even if a Scandinavian was overlord. In another place, Bancroft says that other kingdoms in Central America were "allied with yet to a certain degree subordinate to the original empire whose capital was Nachan, built and ruled by Votan himself and his descendants." These were Tulan in Michouacan, Mayapan in Yucatan and Chiquimula, "possibly Copan, in Honduras." Each of these could have had a different dominant settler group.

Bancroft does not belittle these histories but writes that they prove "the existence in the remote past of a great and powerful empire in the Usumacinta region, and a general belief

among the subjects of that empire that the beginning of their greatness was due to a hero or demi-god called Votan." The Votanic, he says, was not the first civilization in the Americas, but it is the first known to us.¹⁸

As Cyclone Covey remarked in the early 1990s, when evidence for the multicultural origins of American Indians began to pile in:

Recognizing what is unknown and how supercilious old theories fail to interpret the known may be the most salutary development of the last two decades. We had to discard an arrogant conviction of innate inferiority of Indians as well as of their unrelatedness to the same Old World ethnic groups we encounter in Eurasian and African history. We grossly underestimated both earliness and lateness of overseas migrations, their scale and impact. We did not appreciate how deeply traditions carried across both Atlantic and Pacific hybridized in the duress of regressive adaptation. Realization of false assumptions generated new discovery as discovery outmoded false assumptions. When baffled to despondency, we can contrast present grasp with that of the obsolete 70s and anticipate staggering evidence about to emerge.¹⁹

Has anything changed since then?

¹ Astrida Krumina et al., "Population Genetics of Latvians in the Context of Admixture between North-East European Ethnic Groups," *Proceedings of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Section B*, vol. 72, no. 3 (2018), pp. 131-51.

² See Jürgen Spanuth, *Die Phönizier: Ein Nordmeervolk in Lebanon* (Osnabrück 1985). The sea voyages and geography in Homer's *Odyssey* reflect Phoenician traditions. "Many-wiled" Odysseus be a form of Odin. The name was understood by the Greeks as "hated of man and god," but this may be a folk etymology. Note that among Odin/Wotan's many titles and epithets are Journey Empowerer, God of Cargoes, Wise One, Concealer, The One Who Is Many, Loss/Gain Counselor (Gagnrad in the Edda), Journey Adviser, Deceiver, Swift Tricker, Wayfinder, Wanderer, Way-tame, Wayweary and Wide Famed. He is also seen as a powerful wielder of words and spells: Homer repeatedly represents Odysseus as the most eloquent of the Greeks.

³ Durbin Feeling, *Cherokee-English Dictionary*, ed. William Pulte (Tahlequah: Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, 1975), p. 212; cf. Prentice Robinson, *Easy to Use Cherokee Dictionary* (Tulsa: Cherokee Language and Culture, 1996), p. 70. The name of the Blue Paint Clan, on the other hand, clearly preserves the Cherokee word for blue (*sa go ni gi*).

⁴ See Yvette Running Horse Collin, *The Relationship between the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and the Horse: Deconstructing a Eurocentric Myth*. Ph.D. Dissertation in Indigenous Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks, May 2017.

⁵ Michael L. Hogue, "Hannah Hale: The Story of a Pioneer Woman Who Lived Among the Creek Indians and Her Descendants," online at: [The Hogue Connection](#).

⁶ See Gunnar Thompson, *American Discovery: Our Multicultural Heritage* (Seattle: Argonauts Misty Isles, 1994), 272-80.

⁷ Emma Lila Fundaburk, *Southeastern Indians. Life Portraits. A Catalogue of Pictures 1564-1860* (Tallahassee: Rose, 1996) 116.

⁸ Arlington Mallery and Mary Roberts Harrison, *The Rediscovery of Lost America: The Story of the Pre-Columbian Iron Age in America* (New York: Dutton, 1979).

⁹ Mallery and Harrison, pp. 239-42.

¹⁰ Stephen C. Jett, *Ancient Ocean Crossings: Reconsidering the Case for Contacts with the Pre-Columbian Americas* (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2017) 273.

¹¹ Suzanne O. Carlson, "The Decipherment of American Runestones," in *Across Before Columbus*, pp. 216-36.

¹² Barry Fell, *Bronze Age America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), pp. 117f.

¹³ See Richard Nielsen and Scott F. Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence* (N.p.: Lake Superior Agate, 2006).

¹⁴ See Gloria Farley, *In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America* (Golden: Gloria Farley Publications, 2007) 217-24.

¹⁵ Fell, *Bronze Age America*, esp. 102ff. David B. Kelley has qualified some of Fell's findings and suggested the inscriptions at Peterborough "probably date between 1000 and 700 BC, much later than Fell thought" ("The Identification of the Proto-Tifinagh Script at Peterborough, Ontario," in *Across before Columbus*, pp. 170-182). But Kelley didn't shy away from maintaining: "The discovery of the existence of alphabetic texts of the Bronze Age in Scandinavia and Italy and Peterborough, Ontario, is a major breakthrough in our knowledge of culture history."

¹⁶ Christine Pellech, *Die Odyssee: Eine antike Weltumsegelung*, 3rd, expanded and corrected ed. (Greiz: König, 2011), pp. 76-77.

¹⁷ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, vol. III, *The Native Races*, vol. III: *Myths and Languages* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1882), 451-53.

¹⁸ *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, vol. V, *The Native Races*, vol. V: *Primitive History* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1883), pp. 163-65.

¹⁹ "The Implausible Union of Ankh and Thunderbird," in: Joseph B. Mahan, *North American Sun Kings: Keepers of the Flame* (Columbus: ISAC, 1992), 19.

Correspondence address:

Donald Yates

dpy@dnaconsultants.com