Runestones
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As you have noticed, the Chronicler is usually hard up for articles, and so I decided to help out a little. After some thought, I decided that I’d be interested in doing material that had to do with this region and actual history – preferably as it might overlap with the SCA period. Oddly, the region that Northkeep covers has a number of fascinating mysteries and bits of folklore, including a large number of lost gold caches, mines and treasure troves, ghost-lights, the Nowata monster (a Bigfoot like creature) and haunted mounds. But of the choices I felt that the one that needed most to be looked at are the Runestones.

First the legend – Back during the Viking days, one or more Norsemen made their way around the continent and up the Mississippi River, then the inland rivers and left stones with their markings on them. One local historian has told me that they traveled up the Arkansas and left runes as far inland as the region of Bent’s Fork in SW Colorado.

Here are the facts. There are stones, and they do have “runes” on them The best known of these in Heavener, down by Robbers Cave State Park. There are actually three stones near Heavener, one near Poteau, one in Shawnee, and one in Turley. Actually the Tulsa area is alleged to have 4 of these rune stones all with very similar characters, but one was destroyed in the ‘60s, and no one seems to know where the other two are. However, in the Tulsa area, on Turkey Mountain, are two or more carved stones, and so I will slip them in here since they are also supposed to be of great antiquity.

Back in the 70s, “scholars” came around and “translated” these stones, and we should look at these translations:

Heavener #1, or the “The Heavener Rune Stone” was determined to have the text “G-N-O-M-E-D-A-L” from which our erstwhile canton took its name. A different “scholar” decided that this was a date in an obscure Norse code, 11 November, 1012.

Unfortunately, when I compare the runes to Norwegian runes used between 1000-1200, I get “?-A-?-?-?-O/A-L”, with the “?”s indicating characters that do not even exist in this particular Runic set. In the Anglo-Saxon rune set it spells “G-?-N-?O-M-E-?-D-A-?L”, although, in this case the “?”s indicate characters that are similar in appearance, but not identical. In the Elder Futhark, this would be “G-?-O-M-E-D-?-?L” For those not in the know, the Elder Futhark is the runic character set that the northern European rune sets all ultimately derived from, the ancestor runes. The Anglo Saxons runes are very interesting since as far as anyone’s ever known, the Anglo Saxons didn’t arrive in North America until Martin Frobisher’s voyages in the 16th century.

The Heavener #2 is said to be the letter “R” and a “bind rune”. Again, this would be in the Anglo-Saxon character set since in the Norwegian this might be an “M” and a small cross. In the Elder Futhark, this could be an “R” “Z” or a “T” It has also been given as “25 December, 1015” in that same “Norse Code”.

The Heavener #3 is said to be the letters “G” “R” and “T”. Again, this would be in the Anglo-Saxon character set (and that’s a bit of a stretch), since in the Norwegian set this might be an “M”, a “T” and the small cross COULD be an “N”. This was translated as “30 December, 1022”.

The Poteau stone was transliterated "G-L-O-I-A-L-W", which is interesting since that would assign different values to several of the same characters. If we use the character values from "G-N-O-M-E-D-A-L" it probably ought to be "G-N-?-?-E-A-?", and if we expand that out in the Anglo Saxon rune set we
get “G?-N-NG-I-E-A-L-?W”, or gibberish. In Norse it’s “?-A-?-I-?-?-?”, with a number of characters that don’t exist in the Norwegian runes. In the Elder Futhark, this is “G?-?-I- E-A-L-?”. It was also translated as “11 November, 1017”.

The Shawnee transliteration, using the characters from ”G-N-O-M-E-D-A-L” should be ”M-?-D-O-?”. In the Anglo Saxon Runes it’s “M-?E-?D-?O-?”. In the Elder Futhark, this is “M-?-D-O-K”. In the Norse dating code it’s supposed to be “24 November, 1024”.

The Turley stone is not given any sort of translation, except by the guy with the “Norse code” who says it means 22 December, 1022, which is really interesting since it shares no characters in common with Heavener #3, except perhaps the X. I shouldn’t have to point out that NONE of these characters appear in the Norwegian runes. In the Elder Futhark, only the X is present, as “G”. In the Anglo Saxon characters, it’s “G?-?-?-?-?-S-?”

Turkey Mountain #1 is said to be from about 400 BC, and id given in both Ogham and Punic characters. The Ogham is supposed to be “Gwynn”, and the Punic Pi-Ya-Aa – both meaning “white”, and has been ascribed to a Celtic visitor named Gwynn over here with a Phoenician crew. This particular inscription was described in the noted “scholar” Barry Fell’s work, America, BC.

Speaking simply for the “Ogham”, were it in fact Ogham, it would read “A-M-U-I-M-O”, or “Omuima” since Ogham’s read vertically. Gwynn (or Guinn) could be written from this, but would require losing one crossing stroke altogether and rearranging and straightening the remaining ones). The “Punic” might be correct, but its more plausible that it’s someone’s initials.

Turkey Mountain #2 is just listed as “really old”.

You tell me. The three characters on the bottom look like initials.

But rather than looking for the old Norse in the region, possibly we a large number of old time Tolkein Dwarves hiding out around here?