

RESIN #12 from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, California, USA. This is intended for the 62nd SAPS mailing, Jan 63. Crudpub #54.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF LEIF EIRIKSSON'S VINLAND

In 985 or 986 Eirik Thorvaldsson ("Eric the Red") persuaded a large number of Icelanders to emigrate to Greenland. Among them was Herjulf Bardsson. His son, Bjarni Herjulfsson, was in Norway on his usual trading voyage. When Bjarni returned to Iceland he learned that his father had emigrated to the new land. Since Bjarni had spent every second winter with his father he was determined to spend this winter also with his father. So he obtained sailing directions for Greenland and set forth late in the sailing season. A storm came up and blew him far to the southwest. Bjarni came up to a land which was obviously not Greenland since they were so far to the southwest. Besides it was one of wooded, small hills. So they sailed to the northeast for two days between landfalls. This second land was again not Greenland for it was flat and forested whereas Greenland was mountainous and glaciated. Then a southwest wind came up and they sailed for three days and reached a mountainous, glaciated land. But this land was too barren to be Greenland. After determining that this third land was an island they sailed for four days with the same southwest wind and arrived at Herjulfssness in southern Greenland.¹ These are the essential facts gleaned from the

1. "The Saga of Bjarni Herjulfsson" from the Flateyrbók as translated by Edward Raman, The Norse Discoveries In America, pages 15-17.

Sixteen years later (1002 or 1003) Leif Eiriksson decided to explore the lands discovered by Bjarni. Leif retraced Bjarni's course and came to the third land. There was no grass, the land was covered with rocks and in the interior were great glaciers. So Leif named it Helluland (Flat Rock Land). Sailing further they came to a level, wooded land with extensive, gently-sloping sand beaches which Leif named Markland (Forest Land). From Markland they were two days out at sea when they made another landfall. They sailed towards this land and landed upon an island to the north of it. They sailed west into the sound between the land and a cape that went north from the land. They ran the ship into a river which flowed out of a lake. Here they decided to stay for the winter and build houses.

The features of the land that attracted them were the biggest salmon they'd ever seen; good grazing, as it turned out there wasn't any frost during that winter; and an abundance of both grapes and vines. So they named it Vinland (either Wineland or Vineland). The sun rose and set at eyktarstað and dagmálastað on the shortest day of the year.² This account is derived from "The Saga of Leif Eiriks-

2. ibid. pages 23-26.

son" as found in the Flateyrbók.

The next set of clues comes also from the Flateyrbók, "The Voyage of Thorvald Eiriksson". Thorvald was Leif's brother and he sailed to Leif's Houses in Vinland. They take a small boat and sail westwards. The land to the west was timbered down to the shores with white, sandy beaches, there were many islands and many broad shallows. The next summer Thorvald sailed his ship east and then north along the land. A squall hit the ship and blew it ashore on a cape and the keel was broken. They replaced it and then erected the broken keel on the cape, calling it Kjalarness (Keel Cape). They then sailed eastwards along the land until they reached the mouth of a fjord. Thorvald was killed here.³

3. ibid. pages 27-29.

Next came the voyage of Thorfinn Karlsefni which is recorded in Hauksbók and Codex AM 557 in the Arnamagnean Library, København. As translated by Reman we learn that Thorfinn was in Eiriksfiord, Greenland and heard about Vinland from Leif. He decided to colonize. Going first to the Western Settlement, Greenland he then sailed to Bjarney (Bear Island). From Bjarney they sailed south in the open sea for two days and came to a Helluland. (No mention is made of glaciers.) Again they sailed south for two days and sighted a forested land which they named Markland. They sailed south along the coast to a headland with the mainland on their right. On this cape was a keel. So they named it Kjalarness. They kept on southwards along a shelterless coast with long, sandy beaches. They called the beaches Furdírstrandir (Remarkable Beaches). After a while they came to some bays and cast anchor. They then went on further to a fjord and wintered.

Thorfinn didn't find Leif's Houses though he didn't look too hard.⁴

4. ibid. pages 30-38.

Next from the Flateyarbók is "The Voyage of Freydis, Eirik's Daughter".

Freydis went into partnership with two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, for a commercial voyage to Vinland. Leif agreed to lend his sister the use of his houses in Vinland. When they arrived in Vinland Freydis quarreled with Helgi and Finnbogi over their using Leif's Houses. So Helgi and Finnbogi moved further along the shores of the lake and built their own houses.⁵

5. ibid. pages 46-48

These then are the saga accounts which give clues as to the location of Vinland. However, there are discrepancies.

Helluland is stated to be covered with flat rocks and to have glaciers in its interior. The furthest south such a condition obtains is the Cumberland Peninsula of Baffin Island, which is a little north of west of Herjulfssness, Greenland. But this Helluland is stated to be four days sailing between landfalls to the southwest of Herjulfssness. Bjarni also determined that Helluland was an island. Four days sailing to the southwest of Herjulfssness would be Newfoundland. Since Bjarni had sailed to the east of Helluland when blown off course, in order to have known it was an island he must have skirted the west coast. Along the west coast of Newfoundland is the Long Range. Since it was late in the season the Long Range may have been snow-covered. That both Bjarni and Leif mistook snowfields for glaciers when they'd spent all their lives near both seems incredible. But if these were actually glaciers that Bjarni and Leif saw then Helluland would have to be on Baffin Island or farther north. It would have been an even more incredible feat for Bjarni to have managed to circumnavigate Baffin Island which even icebreakers have failed to do. And if Helluland was Baffin Island then the rest of the sagas dealing with Vinland don't make much sense. The sailing directions for Markland and Vinland and the descriptions of those two lands would not fit Labrador and Newfoundland. This rationalization that both Bjarni and Leif mistook snowfields for glaciers is typical of what must be done to find a

reasonable Vinland. But the assumption that Bjarni and Leif mistook snowfields for glaciers involves fewer changes to the Vinland sagas. And this mistake may have been made. Vilhjalmur Stefansson told of his discovery of Meighen Island. One of his companions insisted that Meighen Island was covered with snow. Since the land surface was obliterated under a dome-shaped cover Stefansson reasoned that it must be a glacier. The dispute wasn't resolved when Boice went to see. Yet all these men were well-experienced Arctic veterans, though only Stefansson was familiar with glaciers and those were valley glaciers, not ice caps.⁶

6. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Friendly Arctic, pages 518-519.

Having accepted that Newfoundland is the most logical Helluland two days of southwest sailing would have taken Leif to some portion of Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is flat, forested and southwest of Newfoundland. Then sailing for two more days to the southwest brings us to Cape Cod. The Greenlanders described the Vinland region as having small, wooded hills (Bjarni); having a cape that went north from the land, a river running out of a lake, salmon, good grazing, no frost that winter (possible on Cape Cod), grapes, vines and the sun rose and set at a particular time on the 21st of December (which doesn't prove much since the Norse had no clocks or navigating instruments for a precise fix. Calculations based on this evidence have placed Vinland from around 37° to 55° north latitude) Leif; and finally the coast trends west where they are small islands, broad shallows and well-forested coasts with broad, sandy beaches. East of Leif's Houses in Vinland the coast runs east and then north to where a cape juts out into the sea (and where they erect their broken keel), the land then trends eastward to where they find a fjord (Thorvald). Thorfinn found a keel on a cape (which must, in all probability, have been Thorvald's). This cape was two days sailing south of a forested land which was two days sailing south of a rocky land. This is the second discrepancy which the Cape Cod = Vinland theory injects in the Vinland sagas. Thorfinn must have been sailing southwest instead of south. (The coasts opposite Greenland run northwest-southeast until they reach Newfoundland and then they run northeast-southwest until they reach Cape Cod. There are no north-south coasts of any extent that will match the descriptions. Since Thorfinn's sailing time and physical descriptions match the area from Cape Cod to Greenland his directions must be off by forty-five degrees.) South of Kjalarness the coast was without harbors and had long, sandy beaches. Somewhere beyond this cape were some islands and beyond them a fjord.

Using this evidence Frederick J. Pohl identified Leif's Vinland as the Cape Cod region. (So have most other books I've read for this paper.) Pohl's island north of the first landfall in the Cape Cod area is Great Point, his first landfall for Leif is Nantucket.⁷ The cape which went north from the land

7. Frederick J. Pohl, The Lost Discovery, pages 48-56.

is identified with Cape Cod.⁸ The sound between Leif's first landfall and the

8. ibid. pages 56-57.

cape he identifies as Nantucket Sound.⁹ The river which flowed down from a lake

9. ibid. pages 58-63.

he considers to be Bass River Flowing from Follins Pond.¹⁰

10. ibid. pages 66-68.

Certainly Pohl's line of reasoning is sound. If Leif's Houses were on the south shore of Cape Cod the sagas' geographical descriptions fall into place with only the two discrepancies previously mentioned. The flora and fauna are found over a wide range so they're not much help. The frostless winters have occurred on Cape Cod due to the warming influence of the nearly surrounding sea and that the Gulf Stream isn't too far offshore. But Pohl goes further than identifying Vinland with Cape Cod, he pinpoints the exact location of Leif's Houses. Is there any further evidence? There is. Pohl has found mooring holes in the rocks at Follins Pond.¹¹ Additionally there were the remains of a ship's cradle with

11. ibid. pages 69-86.

a fifty-eight foot keel, an eighteen-foot beam and designed to hold a ship weighing less than 22.5 tons. Colonial ships of those dimensions weighed at least sixty tons.¹² Viking ships that have been excavated in Norway weigh from ten to fif-

12. Frederick J. Pohl, Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus, pages 118-123.

teen tons.¹³ However, this is not conclusive, only indicative. Further evidence

13. ibid. page 122

is the existence of two rectangular excavations west of the ship shed. This may have been the house and ship shed of Helgi and Finnbogi. These sites were all excavated by the Massachusetts Archeological Society. They demonstrated that these house sites were at least a few hundred years old. And there was one positive bit of evidence for them being of Norse origin. The house site was exactly seven by three Norse fathoms.¹⁴ If they had been of colonial construction they should have been in English units.

14. ibid. pages 158-170, 185-187.

Thus, while the sagas' description of Leif's Vinland all point to the south shore of Cape Cod there's no direct evidence (except for the dimensions of the house site) for proving this identification. However, Pohl has accumulated a great deal of circumstantial evidence for the Follins Pond area. And there it rests for the time being.

Pleasure Units #2 - Gordon Eklund

Are you sure that the first twenty issues of Galaxy contain more good stories than any other similar run in any other sf zine (with the possible exception of Unknown)? Try reading ASF from Feb. 40 to any arbitrary date up through 1945 or so. And while Unknown was uneven I still prefer it to the best stories Galaxy has ever had. (There haven't been too many really good sf stories in Galaxy. And I never could become enthused about pseudo-sf stories, even they were the staple in Galaxy.) And for that matter the fantasy stories in Unknown were better sf than the stories in Galaxy. Unknown stories were often worked out logically from one impossibility. In Galaxy the typical story is developed illogically from an im-

Warhoon #17 - Richard Bergeron

Baxter: Your theory that New Worlds has constantly changed "layout, balance of material, departments, art and practically every other feature of the magazine" seems far-fetched to me. I wish you'd substantiate this claim. While I'm not in Carnell's confidence the only policy change I can find is in the use of photographic covers beginning with #120, Jul 62. The departments seem to come and go in variation with Campbell's oft-repeated dictum that typemetal is inelastic. Carnell runs stories in preference to departments though he's on record as being in favor of a lettercolumn. The lettercol, though, only seems to appear when he has interesting letters and room. This unlike some pulps of the past (TWS, Startling and yes Wally, Planet) where the stories only purpose often seemed to be that of comment-hooks for the letterhacks. The internal layout is as standardized as a Crudpub. What interior art there has been for years has mostly been filloes by ATOM. The readership of New Worlds is supposed to prefer wordage to artwork. What do you mean by the "balance of material"?

Ah, a generalization I'll nearly buy. ((J. G. Ballard is)) "the most promising writer of short sf in the field today." Such stories as "The Waiting Grounds" with its tremendous impact of imagery and sense of futility, "Chronopolis" which seemed a bit silly in its premise of men being motivated to such an extent by the passage of time but this silly notion held me spellbound and more recently "The Watch-Towers" with its build-up of tension as the hero defies the social order all the way to a perfect and unhackneyed ending. This isn't much of a list of Ballard stories but they satisfy the following conditions: a) I remember the story and title fairly well, b) they impressed then and c) they still impress upon remembrance. Ballard's chief skill seems to be in creating moods with intense emotional impacts. He's also adept at characterization. And he has a knack of assessing the world from a different viewpoint. But I don't think too many of his stories really have anything significant to say.

Laurence M. Janifer: "Christopher Anvil" is Harry Crosby, not anyone else. As for who Harry Crosby is all I know is that he is/was a New Yorker and had a story in the Nov 53 Imagination. (How many people took Avram Davidson's nonsense seriously?)

Fred Pohl: As Bergeron commented it would be a new reader indeed who'd write to a magazine asking for a lettercol when the magazine hasn't had one during the last thirteen years. So I'm quite happy to believe that you don't have many letters asking for a lettercol. And besides, if lettercols were all that popular why didn't the majority of sf readers write to the Standard zines. Just about anyone could get a letter pubbed and the remainder were mentioned as having written. Yet there never seemed to be more than a hundred or so letterhacks at any one time. So I think you're entirely justified in not having a lettercol on those grounds. But Carnell advanced an entirely different argument in favor of a lettercol. He pointed out that many of the present-day sf writers came up from the lettercols. They wrote in to discuss the stories and finally started writing stories and selling them. Of course, you can't be sure how many of these types would have written stories without having had access to a lettercol.

Blish: The Charles L. Harness story you're trying to recall is "The New Reality", TWS, Dec 50; The Best Science Fiction Stories 1951 ed. by Bleiler and Dikty.

Bergeron: The Murray Leinster stories you have in mind are "The Mad Planet"

Argosy 12 Jun 20, Amazing Nov 26, Tales of Wonder Spr 39, Fantastic Novels Nov 48; "The Red Dust" Argosy 2 Apr 21, Amazing Jan 27, Tales of Wonder Win 39, Fantastic Novels May 49 and "Nightmare Planet" SF+ Jun 53. All three stories were combined into the book, The Forgotten Planet. But it was hardly a vegetable-dominant ecology. The ecology was dominated by both flora and fauna (with the exclusion of man, the insignificant).

And in "Clash by Night" and Fury the ecology isn't vegetable-dominated. Man's environment is in the Keeps but the surface of Venus was again like unto The Forgotten Planet. Both flora and fauna were dominant. Remember the serpents, the mud-wolves and the other creatures? They were as responsible as the plants for man being in the Keeps.

John Baxter, Box 39, King Street PO, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Dear Norm,

Thanks for Resin #11. Dick Bergeron had already sent me a photocopy of your comments on the Warhoon column, and I was all set to reply when my own copy arrived. Hence the speed. I wish it was always as easy to get away a quick comment.

I don't know exactly how you would like me to prove that what I say about the Nova mags is true. You get them all yourself. The evidence is there, and if you don't draw the same conclusions from it that I do, then apparently we must use different standards. Binding, for instance -- I don't agree at all that only Galaxy is worse in this respect. Analog covers are notorious for their tendency to drop off if you look at them sideways. F&SF cracks along the spine with monotonous regularity. The Z-D twins are little better -- they shed signatures like I do dandruff. If is as bad as Galaxy, if not a shade worse. I have yards of prozines in my collection, both US and British. Of them all, only my run of New Worlds, Science Fantasy and Science Fiction Adventures shows a clean, uncracked spine surface. The cover stock is thin and glued firmly to the signatures. This does make them subject to a lot of creasing, of course, but with care they hold together far better than the American product.

All our American magazines come out here in bulk, and are distributed in precisely the same manner as the Nova pubs, so mailing damage isn't to blame for the US lack of quality. Of course, the poor condition of my older US prozines may be attributable to this, but all the US mags have been given newsstand distribution out here for the past three or four years.

No, I don't miss the point with cover dates. I know why the publishers post-date, but I don't agree that this is essential or even logical. Other magazines don't need to do this to keep their sales up, and in many cases the arguments you put forward would seem to apply to them far more than they do to the sf magazines. Punch, for instance, comes out weekly, yet it is always dated precisely, right to the day and month. This doesn't seem to hurt sales, so I fail to see why the statement of the month in which Analog was published would damage their popularity either.

True, Carnell dropped the date from the spine, but it has always appeared on the contents page, and the date has always been the date of publication, not "the last day for decent sales".

My admiration of "Father of Lies" sprang not so much from the plot (which,

you may recall, I admitted was as old as the hills, and just about as dull) but from the way in which Brunner used it. The actions of the characters in "Father of Lies" seemed to me to be more reasonable and logical than those in the other stories you mention (only three of which I've read, incidentally). As I pointed out, Brunner didn't use the old cliches just because he was working with a cliché plot. He thought about it, and he used his imagination. There is a definite freshness in his approach to this yarn, which is probably why I singled it out for special consideration.

Thanks for your comments anyway, Norm. I appreciate them and I've taken notice of them. From the next Warhoon, I'm dropping the prozine review column and moving on to a more general item dealing with larger problems and more popular subjects. I'll be interested to hear what you have to say about my column when I start to present a bigger target.

Best, as ever,
John

((Note to Bergeron. Don't bother sending anyone photocopies of pertinent passages in my fanzines. Anyone that's mentioned is sent a copy of the issue by me. They may not receive it or pay any attention when they receive it but I've sent it. ## Back to Baxter. Okay, we're using different standards of comparison for binding. I like the magazine to be well-stapled together, solid along the spine, with good cover stock well-glued to the spine. In addition it must be able to survive the mails (which is a good test of the wrapper/envelope and the poor quality of the mail handling). And the paper used for the signatures must be strong enough to hold together. All of the current zines except F&SF use staples so how do you find the 4-D zines shedding signatures? Galaxy's paper isn't strong enough to withstand the staples, in addition the glue isn't strong enough to hold so much content to such weak paper. F&SF uses the strongest glue of any current pulp (they have to without staples), with their heavy cover stock they're certainly better bound than the Nova zines. The top and bottom of the spine are sometimes chipped but this seems to be due to being mailed in a wrapper rather than an envelope. Not all mailed copies and many newsstand copies don't exhibit this chipping. ASF was very well bound until the Feb 55 issue, inclusive. They changed printers and became a medium-quality binding zine. For a long time the best-bound US prozine was If under Quinn. Even ASF wasn't that good. But a couple of years ago ASF once more upgraded its binding and it's now far superior to the Nova pubs or any other sf zine for that matter. Like yours, my Nova zines show a clean, uncracked spine surface (for the most part). But they came in envelopes from England and, ^{are} still inferior to Analogs and earlier ASF that came in wrappers. You can see that the Nova zines are put together poorly to begin with though they're tough enough to not be severely damaged in transit. ## I'm amused by your selection of Analog for mis-representation of the cover date. It comes on sale in the middle of the month prior to its cover month. This is later, even far later than the others. They're generally gone by the time the cover month comes around. And my Nova zines are postmarked the month prior to their date. Though when they actually go on sale in England I don't have any idea. At any rate Nova zines for any given month are mailed prior to ASF. ## I should have made myself clearer. I don't consider "Father of Lies" to be original enough in any respect. I mentioned several stories which are better all respects considered. Try reading more than three of them. You'll probably compare them unfavorably with "Father of Lies" since you read it first but with me it was the other way around. ## Thanks for the letter. I'm glad someone wrote. ## And I'm waiting for the next Warhoon, especially to see what's in your column.))