

An Unconvincing Attempt?

"An unconvincing attempt to attribute the VM to Clavus is made by Ib Rønne Kejlbø (1966); the differences between Clavus' Greenland and that of the VM are too great for them to have a common source." Thus writes Professor Einar Haugen (Ref. 1, p. 290). It is true that I have advanced the theory that Clavus cannot be excluded as a possible source of the Vinland Map (Refs. 2, 3, 4 [pp. 21-23], 5). That theory is, among other things, based on the fact that Clavus is the only cartographer known to us who occupied himself with a cartographic construction of the North Atlantic Territory about the time when the VM was prepared. I still doubt that Clavus is superseded as a possible source of the VM, and by no means on the basis of Haugen's comparison between Greenland on Clavus' map and Greenland on the VM. However, does Haugen manage to compare Clavus' Greenland with the Greenland on the VM? It is a well-known fact that maps draughted by Clavus himself do not exist. We have nothing but copies of his supplement to Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*, i.e. the Nancy work and the Vienna text. The Nancy work, which is the oldest, also contains the first map on which Greenland is reproduced by name, but it is only known as a copy in an addition to a Ptolemy copy executed for Guillaume Fillastre about 1430 (Ref. 6, p. 28). The work which was to be of greater importance is the Vienna text which is known to be in two copies (Codex Vindobonensis latinus 3227 and Codex Vindobonensis latinus 5277). In this we find position-fixings but no maps (Ref. 6). The position-fixings of Greenland's southern point are surprisingly good. How could Clavus reach so good a fix? From sources which he may have had at his disposal. There are first and foremost the old Greenland sailors' course instructions. In these a description is given of the navigation from Norway directly to Greenland, and we are told that from Bergen the route should go westward to Hvarf (Cape Farewell) on Greenland, leading a little south of Iceland but twice as far north of Ireland. If one examines the position-fixings in the Ptolemy copy of Nancy, one finds a striking similarity with the course instructions. Probably he has related the information from the course instructions to astronomical records from the prelate towns of Trondheim, Bergen and Roskilde. (About the calculation of the polar altitude of Roskilde in 1274 refer to Alfred Otto: *Liber daticus Roskildensis*, 1933, p. 22). Clavus records 20 position-fixings concerning Greenland. Here we touch the crux regarding Greenland's configuration on the

VM. A cartographer who is presented with these position-fixings must from his own imagination and temperament take a decision on the shape of Greenland. Something similar to this manifests itself in various Ptolemy editions in which the outlines of the territories vary considerably. And this is no less the case as regards the northern territories, for here the position-fixings were few.

In the Nancy text we only find position-fixings for the east coast of Greenland, whereas the Vienna text states localities on both the eastern and the western coasts. On the other hand there is no mention of Vinland in either of the works. But this does not exclude Clavus as a source of the VM either, because there is nothing to prevent Clavus from having extended his geographical knowledge of the northern countries to include Vinland at the time when the VM is thought to have been produced, i.e. about 1440. Another explanation, and perhaps a more probable one, is that Clavus and those who copied him, by and by got the necessary courage to bring forward new information about the North Atlantic territory. This absolutely did not fit into the dogmatic geography of the Middle Ages. *See frontispiece.*

It must be remembered that Clavus' extension of Ptolemy's world picture of seven latitudes in itself was a revolutionary event which caused a vigorous reaction from the geographers who dealt with inhabited and non-inhabited zones. It must have been difficult to comprehend that an inhabited territory, Vinland, existed far out west. Under all circumstances it sounds very peculiar to me that Clavus who knew about Greenland should not know about the Northerners' Vinland.

Haugen calls Clavus an "adventurer and manifest liar" (Ref. 1, p. 290) presumably because of Clavus' original naming and Clavus' assertion that he had personally been in Greenland. The fact that a writer or a draughtsman asserted that he had personally visited a certain locality or that he had his information from an old source, was very common in the Middle Ages — one simply did so in order to make one's information more reliable. Lies? Yes! But no such thing pertained to Clavus. And in any case it is perfectly clear that Clavus' cartographical achievement which may be designated as an interpretation of the Northerners' voyages in the North Atlantic Ocean — deliberately or not on the part of Clavus — stamped the map material of this territory during most of the fifteenth century and the whole of the sixteenth. His introduction of Greenland into cartography simply caused a disruption of the narrow world picture of the Middle Ages.

I completely agree with Haugen that "A mere look at Resen's, Sigurdsson's and all other maps drawn from Icelandic sources shows that these were not based on first-hand experience, but on learned construction and the reading of the sagas" (p. 290). But there is one thing that distinguishes Clavus from the other Northern sources and that is the fact that he calls Greenland an Island: "Gronlandie Insule chersonesus dependet a terra inaccessibili a parte septentionis uel ignota propter glaciem" (Codex Vindobonensis latinus 5277 and Codex Vindobonensis latinus 3227) and this means that Clavus cannot be excluded as a source because Greenland appears as an island on the VM.

It is perhaps possible, as Haugen assumes (p. 294), that the one who drew the VM had his knowledge from the Pope's archives. But of course this does not exclude Clavus as a source either, because Clavus' information about Greenland, etc. would very likely have reached these archives; if the opposite was the case it would be strange, because no doubt the Pope must have been interested in Clavus' information about a widening of the world picture of seven latitudes; Clavus lived in Rome in the 1440's.

At least let me say that I do not consider it impossible that in time another source will appear from which the VM can be derived. But in the same breath I want to stress that Clavus cannot be excluded — as Haugen has tried to do — on the basis of: "the differences between Clavus' Greenland and that of the VM . . ." It is not only an *unconvincing attempt* to exclude Clavus as a source, but it is an attempt which cannot be put into practice at all.

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dus Clavus). København: Det kongelige danske Videnskabernes selskab. German edition: 1909. Der Däne Claudius Claussøn Swart (Claudius Clavus), der älteste Kartograph des Nordens, der erste Ptolemäus-Epigon der Renaissance. Innsbruck: Wagner. 266 pp.

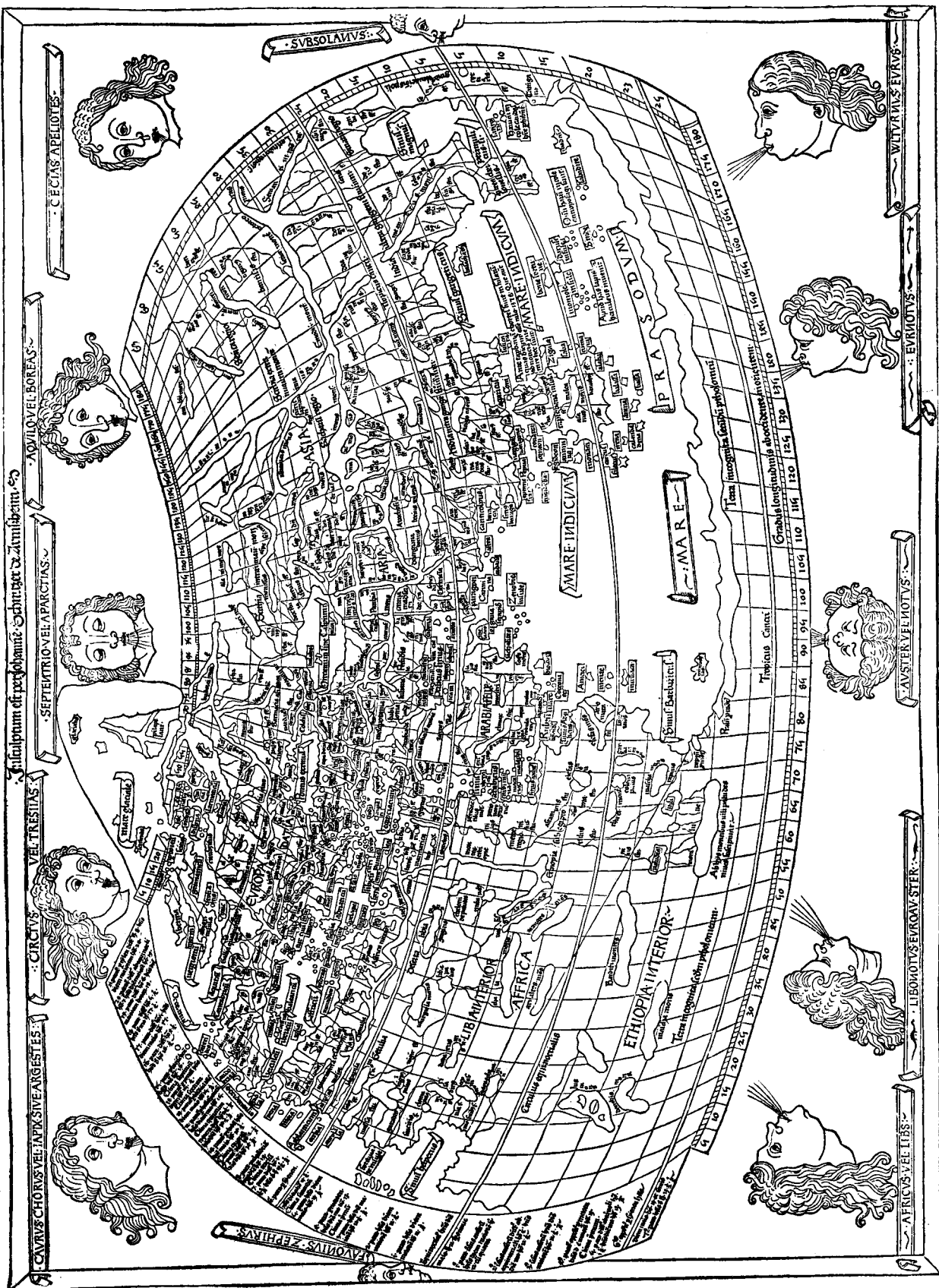
Obsidian Samples from Archaeological Sites in Northwestern Alaska: A Preliminary Report

One hundred and two obsidian specimens from a series of archaeological sites in northwestern Alaska were submitted to the Museum of Anthropology, the University of Michigan, by Mrs. Ruth W. Giddings, Curator, and Douglas D. Anderson, Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, for analysis by neutron activation. The major portion of the samples (84) derive from the deeply stratified site of Onion Portage on the Kobuk River. This site had been investigated by J. L. Giddings¹ and is still under excavation by Anderson². In the Brown University collections, seven other locations were also represented by one or more specimens. A final sample was received from R. L. Humphrey, George Washington University, from the Utukok River Driftwood Creek Site³.

The neutron activation analysis technique has been discussed in detail elsewhere^{4,5} and will not be reviewed here. The Na and Mn contents and the Na/Mn ratio of each sample have been determined (Table 1). The result was four Na-Mn groups. Preliminary Na-Mn groups of this type have proven useful in the Near East^{6,7} and in North America^{8,9} for the initial separation of geologic sources and for archaeological specimens where source data are not yet complete. The latter is the case for northwestern Alaska.

Group A is defined by a Mn content of 7.3 to 8.3×10^{-2} per cent and a Na/Mn ratio of 45 to 51. There are 5 samples in this group (Tables 1 and 2). All Group A Samples (860, 870, 918, 922, and 925) are from Onion Portage. Samples 918, 922 and 925 are from Band 3, and sample 860 is from Band 5, Level 2, where it is in association with 6 Group B specimens. Sample 870 is from the Onion Portage Hillside and the Flank of Gully No. 1, bottom of the sod layer.

Group B comprises 89 of the 103 specimens. This group has a Mn content of 5.8 to 7.0×10^{-2} per cent and a Na/Mn ratio of 53 to 60. Seventy-four of the samples came from



Map of the world in Ptolemy, edition of 1482. See pp. 151-152.