

# **WALAM OLUM (MAALAN AARUM)**

## **COMPARISONS of LANGUAGES**

### **WORD (PHRASE) BY WORD (PHRASE) DECIPHERMENT**

(All references are to Sherwin's eight volumes of the *Viking and the Red Man*)

Original English	The fathers of	
Recorded sounds	Name saugi      pek	
Algonquin words	Nama sugge      paka	v. 4 p. 91, v4. p. 136 1*
Old Norse	Nema soekkva buka (is)	& v, 2. p. 108
Norse/English	Not compressed pack ice	1* 2*

1\* The Algonquin word “paka” means “to strike.” The modern Norwegian dictionary has the word “pakkis,” which means “pack ice.” Floating ice that strikes (boats) is a better description of “pakkis” than ice that is packed together.

An examination of Sherwin’s list of “p-k-” Algonquin words came down to “paka” as the word similar in sound to “pek.” A good hypothesis may be that “pek” was originally “pakkis” because the Walam Olum word “pek” is used repeatedly in sentences about frozen water.

The “is” syllable may have been lost by historians who did not know about “striking ice.” The knowledge of “pakkis” would have been unimportant to the sixteen generations of Algonquin/Norse people who roamed the solid land of America.

Until a better explanation appears, “pek” will be deciphered to be the same as modern “pakkis.”

2\* Note the distinct difference between the original English phrase and the decipherment via the Old Norse. The Old Norse words describe features of an open water marvel, which the pictograph appears to illustrate.

The only two Algonquin words that have any correspondence to the original English words are the names of the bird and animal. Even those names are not correct, but the Historian must have understood the “white” meaning. The Recorder or Editor apparently associated the names with the wrong set of sounds.

Because most of the original English has no correspondence to the original sounds, the English phrases were exchanged so the animal names match to the correct set of original Walam Olum sounds.

Original English	remain	
Recorded sounds	pokha pokha pek	
Algonquin words	pokha pokha paka	v. 2 p. 172 & p.108
Old Norse	bakki      bakki      buka	
Norse/English	banked      banked      pack ice	3*

3\* The Old Norse description in these two phrases, “Not compressed pack ice – banked, banked pack ice” is probably the best short description of an open water marvel, which has open water in the midst of thick ice.

Original English	rich In fish	
Recorded sounds	gun eun ga	
Algonquin words	gu'n ewun ka	v. 6 p. 30 & v4. p. 106
Old Norse	korn foen ka	
Norse/English	snow drifts a lot	
Original English	the bald eagle	
Recorded sounds	wapla newa	
Algonquin words	wapi (niska)	v. 5 p. 162 &
Old Norse	verpa (niska)	North American Indian, p. 206 4*
Norse/English	White geese	

4\* The Algonquins appeared to name animals and birds by imitating the sounds they made. “Niska” is the Cree name for goose. The original creator of the Walam Olum was probably describing a white goose. When the Historian and the Recorder tried to record verbal history in Indiana, the bald eagle was a good, but wild, guess based on their experience.

In the same way, the white animal was certainly not a wolf. The name is closer to the names given to bears by the Cree and Algonquin tribes.

Original English	along the sea	
Recorded sounds	ouke n	
Algonquin words	ogi ma	v. 1 p.135 & v. 3p. 34
Old Norse	hoega madh	
Norse/English	high (ruler)	5*

5\* Although “ogima” was used by the Algonquins for “chief” the word had “extensive and indefinite application.” [Faries]. In this verse “ogima” appears to mean an important bird and animal near an open water marvel.

Original English	and the white wolves	
Recorded sounds	wapla mewi	
Algonquin words	wapi (musqi)	v. 5 p. 162 &
Old Norse	verpa (musqi)	North American Indian, p. 206 4*
Norse/English	white bear	

Original English	and muscles	
Recorded sounds	ouke n	
Algonquin words	ogi ma	v 1 p.135 & v 3 p. 34 5*
Old Norse	hoega madh	
Norse/English	high (ruler)	

## SUMMARY OF DECIPHERMENT

WALAM OLUM	ALGONQUIN	OLD NORSE
Namesaugipek pokhapokhapek guneunga waplanewa ouken waplamewi ouken	Nama sugge paka pokha pokha paka gu'newun ka wapi (niska) ogima wapi(musqi) ogima	Nema soekkva buka bakki bakki buka korn foen ka verpa (niska) hoega madh verpa (musqi) hoega madh
		V
		Not compressed pack ice
		banked banked pack ice
		snow drifts a lot
		White geese
		high man (ruler)
		white bear
		high (ruler)
V		
The fathers of [remain] [rich In fish] (the bald eagle) along the sea {and the white wolves} and muscles		V
		Where there was little pack ice in heaped ice with a lot of snow drifts, the white geese ruled and the white bear ruled.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

The variation of the original English words from the Algonquin/Old Norse meanings may be because the Historian and the Recorder did not fully resolve the meanings of the original sounds. They may not have known about open water marvels and “pek.”

They should have been able to recognize “ogima,” a well known Algonquin word, but perhaps the memorized sound had morphed and the word was used in association with birds and animals. They may have guessed that the “ouken” word was associated with the fish in the pictograph. The fish in the pictograph appears to be there to illustrate that the bears are sitting on a floating ice berg.

The survival of the original sounds and their correspondence to known Algonquin/Old Norse phrases is a testament to the honest effort of the Historian and Recorder to preserve the verbal history. Also it is a testament to Reider T. Sherwin who collected and correlated Algonquin/Old Norse sounds and meanings.

This verse about the open water marvel appears to be out of sequence. The verse fits better between “saved themselves and rested on the other side” (verse 10) and “moving down from the land of the snow (verse 11)” Somewhere in the memorizing generations the pictograph sticks for verses 11 and 12 may have been switched.