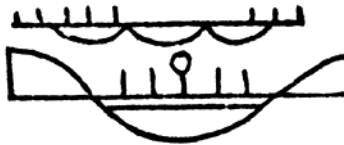


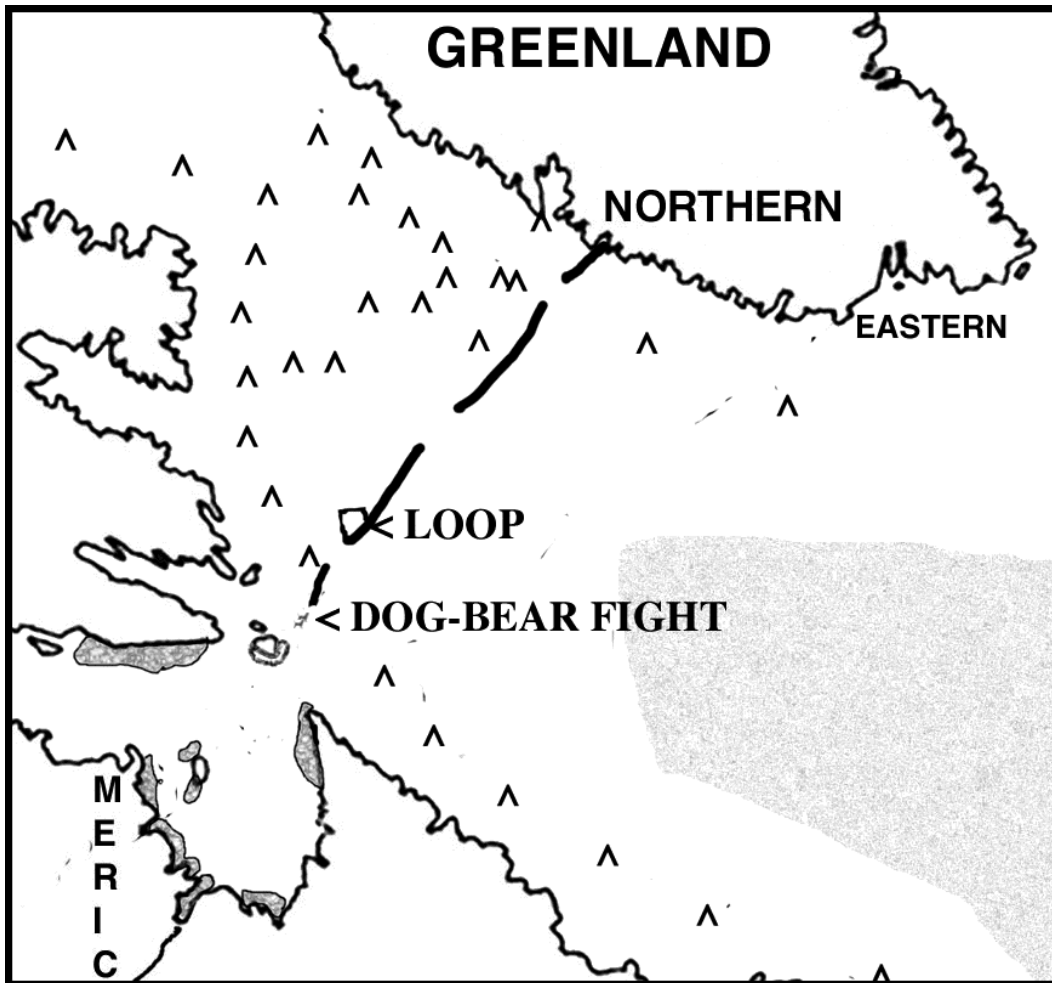
STORIES
OF
MAALAN AARUM

THE MOB



E. S. 3:18

.The MIGRATION



The migration went as planned until Grimhild hacked a horn our of the ice.
After that episode a white bear caused a fight.

The MOB

What a mob! What can be said about one thousand people moving across the ice during the dark time of the year? They each were moving inside their own little walking-houses, the double suits of caribou hide. Each sled team was pulling enough pemmican to last two moon's time. They kept moving even as one third of them slept. They knew where they were going by the stars, the wind, and the Kimal. The ice was solid, which meant the footing was good.

Each set of sleds moved apart so they could only see the sleds on either side. The wide front enabled them to watch for open water and the possibility of food. They found a few seals, but only enough to enliven a day now and then. When the pullers saw a pressure ridge or a rafting front approaching, the beaver-heads on the utility sled would search for the simplest passage. Then the sleds would move toward that passage to chisel ice steps and help each other, transfer loads, drag sleds over, and reload.

As the pressure ridge crossings became routine, the working pace hardly slowed. The beaver-heads usually arrived first and hacked out steps up and over the pressure ridge. Next, four of the strongest, most sure-footed men positioned themselves along the top of the pressure ridge. They dropped walrus ropes to the ice below. A sled team pulled up to the ropes. The pullers shouted for the sleepers to wake up and get out of the sled. Meanwhile the pullers quickly tied the pulling harnesses to the ropes. The sled team emptied the sled by people lifting out their portion of the pemmican and slinging it onto their backs. They placed a bundle strap around their forehead, leaned forward and tied the bottom of the bundle onto the waist. They leaned into the load as they climbed single-file up the icy steps. At the top of the pressure ridge, they turned around and descended, backwards, to the ice on the other side.

Meanwhile the four men on the pressure ridge pulled the sled to the top of the ridges. Two people of the sled team guided the sled, if necessary, by using following ropes. When the sled reached the top of the pressure ridge, two guide ropes handled by men on the far side were attached. The men at the top of the pressure ridge and the men with the guide ropes lowered the sled to flat ice on the far side. Then the men untied the guide ropes from the sled and tied them to lift ropes. The men at the top reeled in the lift ropes, untied the guide ropes, and wrapped them around a lance stuck into the ice. Then they dropped the lift ropes down for the next sled.

On good pressure ridge crossings, there was a steady line of climbers on the icy staircase. The sled lifters would be lowering a sled to the far ice in time for the sled team to reload and get out of the way. The first sleds over the pressure ridge

moved to the right or left to clear the passage. Usually the first full set of eleven sleds was over the pressure ridge and moving again when the second set arrived. Successive uses of the steps and sled paths made the task easier for the last set of sleds.

The activity and the routine enhanced the co-operation of the people in the groups. Members of isolated farmhouses who had rarely talked to the neighbors before were calling out often to those same neighbors on their left and right. There was a festive feeling in the air. The people had decided. The people had acted. The people were leaving the freezing cold of the gates of Hel behind them. The weather felt warmer already.

Styrk in front, Hallgrim and Tjalve in the middle, and Talerman at the rear were aware the weather was warmer than usual. The ice was slippery. The icing on the sled runners was melting faster than it should. Many people were throwing their hoods back.

When the sun peeked briefly above the horizon about four sleeps after Talerman moved onto the ice, the towering icebergs from the breast of Hel could be seen to the northwest. Styrk would be the first to know if the icebergs were moving south. Hallgrim figured that the icebergs must surely be moving, but since he was seven sleeps behind Styrk, he had to trust Styrk's judgment. Then, in the moonlight, Hallgrim saw a man and dogs approaching.

Runolf called for the dogs to halt and was catching his wind when Hallgrim came up to ask, "Did Styrk send you?" Runolf still could not speak clearly, but he panted out, "Yes."

After several moments Runolf caught his breath enough to talk clearly. "Styrk says the icebergs are moving south fast. He says he shows he is two notches above the line to Merica, whatever that means. Should he angle more south than west until he gets on line?"

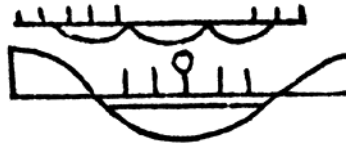
Hallgrim responded:

I see two and a half notches above the line. Yes, Styrk should go much more south until he has gone south two full notches. We must hurry. Tell him to move faster but beware. This is not a cold year. Tell the other sleds on your way back to Styrk. We will pass the word back.

Runolf said, "My dogs and I slept only a watch ago. I will start back."

Hallgrim nodded and added, "A regular run back and forth would be helpful."

Runolf's whip cracked through the stillness of the moonlight. The dogs leaped forward as he shouted back, "I think so, too."



The sleds angled more south than west as Styrk eyed the large iceberg looming in the northwest. When the Amitsaurssuk sleds passed west of the iceberg, Styrk asked another utility sled to move up to become leader. Styrk decided to stay behind to keep an eye on the iceberg slowly coming south.

The Anda sleds moved west of the iceberg but snaps and cracking of the ice were heard. Styrk sent Runolf back at a fast pace to encourage the Sandnes' sleds to hurry. When Runolf arrived, he found that Hallgrim had already figured that speed was crucial. The Sandnes' sleds were moving as fast as they could without the people sweating. Hallgrim urged Runolf to go further back to the Anavik sleds. Runolf hesitated. He said, "It is not wise for me to do that, I have an agreement with Talerman I will stay away from him."

Hallgrim said, "Talerman will be with the last sleds. At least tell the first sleds, they can relay the word back to Talerman." Runolf nodded and guided his dog sled toward the east.

The large iceberg slowly moved south. The Sandnes' sled teams walked west of the iceberg. Then the last of the Anavik sleds moved west of the looming iceberg as the sun was rising one morning. That morning men were taking off their mittens for several moments at a time. The cracking of the ice was so loud that sometimes conversation had to be halted. The skilled hunters went north to the edge of the open waters behind the iceberg. They killed many seals.

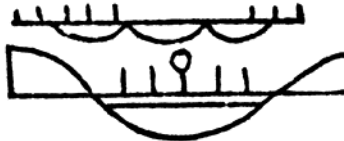
When the time for necessary things came, Talerman told the sled teams to take a little longer rest to recover the energy used up by the fast pace. The people on the sleds broke out the best food they had. A fire was started and passed throughout the sled teams. The first seals from around the iceberg were pulled up and divided. The children enjoyed the taste of fresh blubber.

Grimhild had taken Eyvind north, away from the sleds to avoid having to talk to her father. She put the toddling Eyvind down on the ice and helped him walk. When she was satisfied he would stand by himself, she stepped off to do her necessary things. Eyvind looked around. He noticed a slender horn somehow trapped in the ice. The horn was sticking up, out of a small pressure ridge. Most people, who talked it over later, were sure the horn was still attached to a narwhale. Eyvind toddled over to the horn and took hold of it. He wiggled the horn back and forth. Then Eyvind cried for Grimhild to help him. Grimhild returned to the sled to get the large cooking knife. She began to chop a larger

hole around the horn. When she thought the horn was nearly free of the ice, the big narwhale moved. The pressure ridge suddenly broke apart.

"Thwack!" With a sharp thunder "crack," the iceberg moved.¹~ The ice floe split. The split, opening wider and wider, angled off to the southwest.

Grimhild grabbed Eyvind and ran east away from the open water of the split. Talerman and the other beaver-heads jumped to their feet. With the instincts of a lifetime of unexpected events, they turned the last set of sleds around and encouraged everyone to run eastward.



A few hours later the iceberg lurched again. Even larger cracks radiated outward. In two sleeps the iceberg smashed through the spot where the sleds had been. In the days to follow the iceberg crashed south, appearing smaller with each passing day. Another iceberg, spun off the cold breast of Hel in the north, followed in its wake. The churned up ice in the wake behind the iceberg was not freezing fast. The weather grew warmer, and the ice began to melt during the brief hours of sunlight.

Soon after the retreat eastward, Talerman and Paafa Thord were relieved they could account for all the people and the eleven sleds of the last group from Anavik Kirke.

Paafa Thord asked, "What do we do now? If we return to the Northern Settlement, His Eminence Bardarsson will find us. Yet, we cannot stay here."

Talerman replied, "We can stay here for awhile. We have food reserves for an extra moon's time. The hunters are having good luck hunting seals and birds. Perhaps we or Styrk can find a way across the scrambled pack ice."

Paafa Thord asked, "Then we should build icehouses and settle in?"

Talerman replied again:

"No, we should keep moving with the routine we had before. If we stop, too many useless disagreements may start. We do not have to walk as fast and we do not have to climb every pressure ridge, but if we keep moving we will have a moon's time to think of what to do.

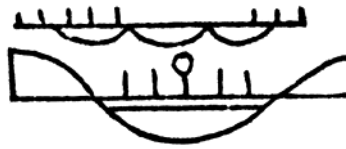
"I suggest we walk east for two watches to get away from the fractured ice. Then we can walk north a sleep, east a sleep, south a sleep, and west

¹ Horn

a sleep. When we get back to the southeast point on the seventh time around, we will have to do something else.

"You go with Arnora and the sled. We will get another man to help. I want to scout the path of the icebergs."

The next day in the brief sunlight, Talerman saw Hallgrim and Runolf waving at him to go to a narrow place in the open water. He used signs to tell them everyone was alive. He learned from their signs that all the other sleds on Hallgrim's side were safe. He signaled for Hallgrim to move the sleds on. He signaled for Runolf to bring Styrk back to look for a path across the churning pack ice.



In the next four sleeps that followed Talerman searched the churning pack ice for a safe passage. Then it was time to meet the sleds as they returned to the starting point. He was relieved to find that the mood remained positive even after the four-sleep circuit.

Talerman did not hear from Styrk for four more sleeps, and he grew concerned. In the daylight the sleds were due back for the second time. He slept in his small islo and arose before the dawn to wait for the sleds to come from the east.

Talerman heard a single bark from the north. Then there were more barks like elkhounds chasing a fox. He turned to look north. A man, a sled, and two dogs were kicking up a plume of snow crystals as they came.

When Runolf recovered his breath he explained:

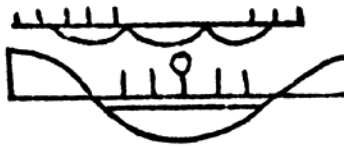
"Styrk went three sleeps along the iceberg path and looked even further from the top of a high iceberg. The pack ice in the open water is not freezing like it should. On his way back Styrk took another look at a big old iceberg that has tipped over. The bottom that was melted by the sea is now on top. The former bottom has rounded edges almost like a big islo except it is about twice as long as it is wide.

"The iceberg is jammed crosswise in the iceberg path. There is smooth ice almost to each end of the iceberg. Styrk and two other beaver- heads carved steps to the top. They crossed over to this side of the iceberg to see if a passage was possible. They came back to our side to pull up the dogs, the sled, and me. Then they lowered me by rope to the ice on this side.

"Styrk told me to find you. They will have the steps and a passageway across the iceberg in better shape when your sleds get there."

Talerman listened closely to Runolf. He appreciated the resourceful man even more. Talerman said:

The pot was simmering when I came out of the islo. Please come in to rest and eat. The utility sled with Arnora on it will not get here before the sun's high time. You can be out of sight when it arrives



The sled pullers were excited when Talerman told them to pull north toward the fourth iceberg. They would make the passage to the west there. When Thord and Arnora arrived, Talerman slipped back into the harness of the utility sled. He enjoyed the pleasure of walking beside Arnora for the first watch. She brought him up to date on the minor events that happened while the sled teams walked around a square. She said most people understood and accepted the reason to keep walking. There had been a few complaints, a little bickering, and two minor fights but she thought the incidents were caused by anxiety of the unknown future. Most also knew the food supply was getting closer to the point of no return. The majority of the sixty-two people behaved with heroic resolve to survive as long as possible. She told of the constant attention that Thurid needed. It was difficult to fend off Valthjof, even now with his daughter as big as a small whale. On one occasion Arnora took up her lance to make Valthjof back off.

After the next rest for necessary things, Paafa Thord joined Talerman in the harnesses. They strode along for nearly half a watch before Paafa Thord commented, "Talerman, I have rarely seen you so quiet. We are planning to cross over an iceberg. There must be things we should talk about."

Talerman looked Paafa Thord in the eyes and said:

I am worried about Ormsson. I do not know if he does things deliberately. But wherever he is, things go wrong. I cannot think how he can mess up crossing an iceberg, but my gut tells me he surely will.

After several more strides Paafa Thord replied, "Perhaps, if I walked next to him, I could defend against his evil doing. The praying book says, 'put on the armor of God.' I could encircle him with God's armor."

Talerman retorted, "You could put God's armor only on one of four sides. Besides Bishop Arne told me once that we 'should not tempt the Lord your God.'"

"To take action is not tempting God." Responded Paafa Thord, "Doing nothing is tempting God. While my body can be only on one side, my prayers can encircle him. I will join his sled at the next rest."

"I do not know how you can." Replied Talerman. Paafa Thord chose not to reply and, once again, they settled into the steady strides without talking.

After the next rest stop, Talerman was adjusting his feet under the sleeping robe to avoid undue pressure on Thurid's stomach when he saw Grimhild step up to Arnora. He heard Grimhild say, "Paafa Thord says I am big enough to help you pull the utility sled and that I should be here because Thurid's baby may come any moment. Talerman heard Arnora start to respond, "I do not think..."

He shouted out, "We planned it that way."

Arnora continued, "... we will not have any trouble pulling this sled, the runners are still well iced." Talerman lay back to ponder the ways of God, briefly, before God granted him blissful sleep.

Crossing the iceberg was a relatively easy task, relative to crossing a dangerous jumble of ice and open water. Talerman and Styrk chose to move half of the people over first, then the sleds, and finally the last half of the people. The first thirty-one people, mostly women and children, scaled the iceberg five man-heights high with the assistance of a knotted walrus rope tied to a spear imbedded into the ice at the top of the iceberg. The spear was jammed into the ice at a forty-five-degree angle. Styrk's men had heated the spearhead and sunk it into the ice. The spear handle had frozen solidly in place as Styrk's group waited for Talerman's sleds to arrive.

The slippery trail across the iceberg was too difficult for two people to walk side by side, so each person moved slowly across the iceberg in single file. A walrus guide rope gave flimsy help because the rope was tied to a few spears jammed into the ice but not sunk and frozen solidly. At the far side four large men, with their feet planted in holes chiseled into the ice, tied on harnesses and lowered the people, one by one, to the ground.

After the first people had crossed over the iceberg, five sleds were lifted up and moved across. A man in front and a man in back guided each sled during the crossing. Then the sleds were lowered to the solid ice on the west side. The ten

pullers and pushers came from the dwindling group on the east side of the iceberg. The man lifting the sleds and their loads was lashed in a harness secured to the spear in the ice.

When the load on the Ormsson sled, sixth in line, was lifted from the ice, the lifting man was surprised by the weight. His foot slipped as he dropped to a knee. He lunged forward. Then, knowing how much he had to lift, the lifter braced himself, leaned into the harness, and slowly lifted the pemmican again. A man watching the spear shouted, "Drop it! Drop it!". The load of pemmican crashed back to the ice below. Upon the iceberg the spear was nearly vertical. The tension on the rope had caused the spear to rotate upward. A crack had formed in the ice above the spear.

After much discussion the men on top of the iceberg decided that the spear would still work if someone held the upper end down to the correct angle when a tension load was put on the spear. Ten more men lifted, pulled and pushed the last five sleds across the icy path on top of the iceberg. As they moved across each puller and pusher took their turn holding the spear in place. Then the last puller and Arnora, who had been tending Thurid, used the knotted rope to climb up the slippery steps.

At Talerman's direction Grimhild, and her son, had waited behind with Thurid. Their father, Valthjof, had insisted it was his role to stay with his daughters. Talerman had wished for a better arrangement, but he could not think of one. A strong beaver-head who was best able to lift Thurid had stayed behind at Talerman's request. Paafa Thord, always standing close to Valthjof, stayed with the group on the Greenland side of the iceberg.

When she reached the top of the iceberg, Arnora moved over the ice to relieve the last puller holding the spear. The strong beaver-head made his ascent. He put on the harness connected to the spear and dropped the sling for Thurid. Talerman and Paafa Thord followed the lift of Thurid with intense anxiety. Paafa Thord gave a silent prayer of thanks as the sturdy beaver-head on top of the iceberg carefully picked up Thurid. The beaver-head moved carefully over the path to the spot near the spear. There he set Thurid on her feet. Arnora took hold of Thurid from the back. They used all four legs for balance as they slowly walked over the iceberg while the beaver-head held the spear handle for the next climber.

At a nod from Talerman, Valthjof began his climb. Talerman and Paafa Thord watched with even more anxiety. But Valthjof reached the top of the climb without incident. Valthjof moved across the ice to hold the spear end. Then Paafa Thord made the climb. Paafa Thord put on the harness and lowered the sling. Grimhild tied her child, Eyvind, into the sling and signaled Paafa Thord to start the lift.

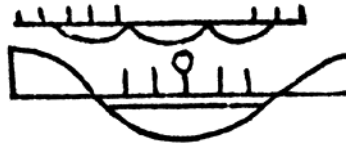
When Eyvind was standing on the top spot next to Paafa Thord, Grimhild started the climb. Meanwhile Paafa Thord slipped out of the harness and guided Eyvind toward Valthjof. When they were within reach of each other, Valthjof grabbed Eyvind, lifted him onto his shoulders, turned, and began to stride across the ice. On the first step his feet flew up waist high. Eyvind fell backwards. The spear began to move. Grimhild felt the rope go slack. Her feet slipped from their toehold. She clung to the rope.

In that same instant, Paafa Thord planted his left foot in the hole in the path near the spear. His right hand caught the spear handle and pushed forward. He dropped his right knee to the ice with his leg aligned with the slippery slope. His left hand swung forward and caught falling Eyvind at the chest. Valthjof's left shoulder hit Paafa Thord's left knee and Valthjof was knocked up slope. He rolled stomach down and grabbed the spear just above the rope knot.

For a few breaths Paafa Thord took time to think a prayer of thankfulness. Then he stood Eyvind against his left leg. He advised Valthjof where to put his feet and how to move carefully. He told Valthjof that Grimhild who was just reaching the top spot would take the child. Valthjof moved slowly across the iceberg on his knees, keeping two hands on the guide rope.

Grimhild standing at the top spot watched Talerman climb. When he reached the top he asked, "Is every thing good?"

Grimhild responded, "Yes, thank God, no trouble at all."



Runolf and his dogs stood at a distance as Arnora was lowered from the iceberg. When he saw Talerman and the four strong beaver-heads descend, he swung his dog team to the west and cracked the whip. He thought:

Ten sleeps to make up. The front sleds should be seeing Merica by now. Even if I cover the distance of two of their sleeps for every sleep I take, I cannot catch them for nearly five sleeps. Still, Styrk told me to get the word to them as soon as possible. The people of the Sandnes Kirke can take a few extra sleeps in the shelters by the low walls.

He cracked his whip over his dogs whose flying feet were throwing ice crystals in his face.

Talerman's sleds quickened the pace so people were almost sweating. They sustained the pace from rest period to rest period. The rest periods were uncomfortably short, but Talerman wanted to get his sleds closer to the sleds ahead if he possibly could.

Talerman, Styrk, and Paafa Thord were aware that their lateness would affect the departures from the low wall shelters. The plans called for only a five-sleep rest by the people of first kirkes and then they would move on. Styrk wanted, desperately, to be back in the lead. He, Paafa Ketil, and Halldis forged on ahead. The two sleds from Styrk's group that had stayed behind at the iceberg with him tried to keep up.

Clear skies, pleasant breezes, long stretches of smooth ice made the progress, as one old man said, "almost as boring as walking in squares." But it was fast.

Talerman saw the light first, ahead and slightly to the right. The light on Bjarni Island was visible where it should have been. During the following day the pullers could see the high ground on their right shoulder. The people who had not walked the Frozen Trail before were awed to learn they were walking over the Indrawing Sea. As the daylight paled Talerman looked ahead hoping to see the light on Akpatok Island. He saw nothing. He turned back to look for the light from Bjarni Island. It should be to the rear right. The light was not there. He felt the mist on his face. He looked up to see no stars. He shouted for a halt.

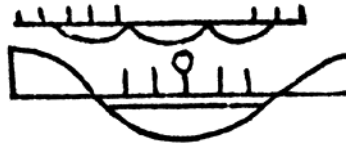
For the next three sleeps, they sat still on the ice. When the daylight briefly returned all they could see was a white mist. When nighttime descended it was incredibly dark.

Because he believed doing something was better than doing nothing, Talerman used the first daylight to align the sleds in single file in the direction they were facing. Then he had the front pullers move the sleds until the pullers behind told them to stop because they were almost out of sight. Then the rear sleds would move up, one by one checking their alignment after each move.

Talerman insisted the sled pullers keep moving during their watch assignments. They did that by slowly walking around the column of sleds while waiting for their turn to move their sled.

In the darkest time of night the sleds were touching. The people on walking watch moved down one side of the sled column and then up the other side as they held on to the sleds. The same old man commented, "This is much more boring than walking in squares."

But not even his humor lightened the darkness.



The mist was becoming lighter on the fourth morning. That morning was when Thurid gave birth. Arnora and Grimhild attended the very difficult birth. The delivery on the utility sled went well under the circumstances. Meanwhile the rest of the column of sleds had advanced away from the utility sled, which was used for the birth. The last sled was barely visible in the mist to the west. Arnora wrapped the child. She checked Thurid once more and decided Thurid was still alive and only sleeping. She lay the child inside Thurid's hood. She had sent Grimhild to the other sleds to look after Eyvind.

Bjørn and Kuptana came out of the mist. They were carrying pemmican and soup to Arnora. They also had instructions from Talerman to ask Arnora to move the sled forward, as soon as it was possible.

A dog barked loudly from somewhere to the rear of the utility sled where Thurid lay with her child. Then two dogs began barking a loud chorus of alarm. Bjørn looked beyond Arnora and immediately recognized the white bear coming out of the mist. The bear had reached the sled on the side away from Arnora and was raising its left paw toward Thurid and the newborn child.

Bjørn's automatic reaction was rapid. The harpoon was in his hand before the pemmican hit the ice. A flick of his left hand freed the harpoon rope from his waist. He rocked back and then hurled the harpoon with all his weight swung into the throw. The harpoon caught the bear in the right shoulder. Bracing against a small pile of snow frozen to the ice, Bjørn pulled the rope and bear toward him. The bear turned, swiping at the rope with his left paw. The two barking dogs came out of the mist on bear's right rear. The bear stopped turning, but still tried to slice the rope.

Arnora reached down into the sled. She found her lance. Suddenly the bear severed the rope and was on all four paws moving toward Bjørn. She chose the broad expanse of the neck just in front of the shoulders as the target. Like Bjørn, she rocked back and swung forward to transfer all her weight into the lance. She saw the lance hit the white fur. Blood painted the bear's right paw. A spot of blood appeared on the left neck.

The snarling and barking dogs came closer. The bloody bear turned toward them. The bear swiped at the dogs with his left paw. The claw caught the skin of the nearest dog just below the jaw, drawing blood. The dogs jumped back and moved to their left, pulling their sled behind them. They stopped to face the bear

again and barked even louder. The bear turned right to follow them and took a step toward them.

Bjørn drew his knife and came running forward. The dogs jumped to their left again to a spot beside the utility sled where Thurid was struggling to rise with the child. Arnora, on the side of the sled away from the bear, reached for the baby. The bear turned toward the barking dogs again and raised his left paw to swipe at them. They backed up against the utility sled and were caught in the harness as the two sleds tangled.

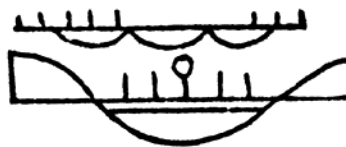
Bjørn saw his chance. He put the cold knife in his teeth. He grabbed the harpoon which was still stuck in the bear's right shoulder and pulled hard. Bjørn slipped and went down on his seat. He swiftly spun to his knees and hands. The bear tipped to the right. The bear put his left paw down to the ice to recover his balance. Balance was difficult to get in the slippery pool of blood under the bear's feet. Again the bear swung right toward Bjørn, ignoring the snarling dogs. Bjørn took the knife from his teeth and scrambled backward. The bear lunged.

Bjørn rose with arms out stretched. He wanted the bear to rise too, so he could duck in to plant the knife below the rib cage. But the bloody bear slid to the ice in front of Bjørn. Bjørn, the bear, Arnora, and Thurid froze in place. The new baby did not cry. Only the agitated barking of the dogs signaled that a life and death confrontation was happening.

Runolf came running out of the mist. He saw that the bear was lying in the red circle of blood. He commanded his dogs to be quiet and lay down. They did not obey. He grabbed their harnesses and pressured them to lie down on the ice. Dropping to a knee he stayed between them to hold them down.

Bjørn studied the bear in the circle of blood. He grabbed the harpoon still stuck in the right shoulder and rolled the bear onto its left side. Talerman came swiftly out of the mist, shouting, "What is happening here?"

Bjørn smiled as he unhooked his harpoon. He said, "Oh nothing much. Mother's lance just cut a bear's bloody vein."



As the first men came to the rescue, Runolf and his dogs moved back into the mist. Much later a message passed along the line of sleds that Talerman should

come to the front sled. When he saw the dogs near the front sled, Talerman realized Runolf was still near by. Runolf stepped out of the darkness. He said,

"Styrk sent me to tell you. The word about the iceberg splitting the ice was passed all the way to the front group of sleds. Actually your rear group of sleds had been moving too fast so that you were only three sleeps from the first group of sleds.

"Anyway, all the sleds slowed down to about half pace. The ice looked good. There was enough food. So they took longer rests and did not hurry. Then an ice break-up at the Indrawing Seas caught them. The front sleds had to wait five sleeps to be sure the ice was solid. After that came a clinging miserable fog.

"The result is that you are not far behind. Styrk, Hallgrim, and Tjalve say that the Big House celebration you were talking about can still happen. They will go slower. You should keep moving fast."

Talerman replied, "When the fog lets us, we will be moving. Runolf, you have good and faithful dogs. Does Arnora remain a compulsion to you?"

Runolf studied Talerman, then he said,

"No, I guess not. Arnora is not a compulsion to me any more. My dogs and Arnora were both in the bear fight. I worried about my dogs. I did not think about Arnora.

"I am proud of my dogs. I am relieved they survived. The wound upset me, terribly, but they have caused worse when they fought between themselves.

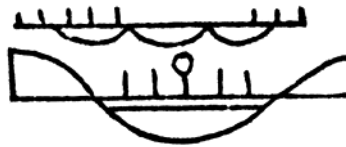
"When I thought about the bear fight afterwards, I feel absolved of past difficulties between Arnora and I. If my dogs had not been there, Arnora, Bjørn, and that lady with her baby may have all died. But I am grateful to Arnora too. If she and the lance had not been there, my dogs would surely have died. When I remember the effect of the lance in that fight, I am thankful that I have only a little scar on my side."

Talerman smiled and said, "Then please join us for soup. I would like to know more about your dogs."

The following morning the white mist was lighter. A few of the pullers thought they saw a flicker of light ahead. Talerman agreed the light must be on Akpatok Island. He formed them in a broad front and they advanced toward the light. As

the daylight faded, they walked through the darkness with the firelight showing ahead of them. They took a path to the right of the fire to avoid the pressure ridges and the open tidal sea around Akpatok Island. Slowly the fire moved to their left. As sunlight came through the mist in mid-morning the bulk of Akpatok Island could be seen below the fire.

Darkness came back. The night was dark black with no moon and low clouds covering the sky. As the Akpatok fire settled toward the southeast horizon, the pullers began to worry again about how to maintain direction. Then straight ahead a dim fire rose out of the ice. There were shouts of exclamation as the walking pace increased. The light was on the fire tower. The fire tower sat on an Island near Merica. The people in the last sleds from the Northern Settlement of Greenland were now Mericans.



Vignette twenty one

IN THE DARKNESS

A day like that day happened only once every year. The trees had begun to turn color weeks ago. The day before they had leaves of light brown, red, and deep purple. Then the cold air of the night before had settled softly among the trees. On that day the wind hardly stirred the leaves. Yet through out the forest the leaves began to fall in earnest. The leaves fell as if some invisible force was pulling all the trees' dresses down.

Azon and Pitolo stood at the top of the steps watching the falling leaves. Pitolo said, "If only all dying could be so pretty. How many days do you think Malaan Aarum can last?"

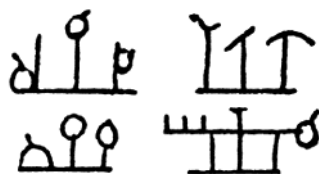
Azon said:

"The Big House celebration is over in two days. I am sad to think about it, but I would prefer to see him die, before we have to set him out in the cold.

"Come. Let's get on with it. Show me your engraving."

Pitolo said, "Here. What a mess! I want to see how you showed all kinds of clans and all kinds of men coming from everywhere and then showing that all, absolutely all, came."

Azon looked at Pitolo's engraving. He had to agree it looked like a mess. Instead he said, "Yours does look confusing. Here is mine."



Azon continued:

Grandfather said to show all, but he only mentioned three directions, three clans, three types of important men, and three variations of ordinary men. So I made four little engravings; one for directions, one for clans, one for important men, and one for the ordinary men.

Pitolo said, "Once again your engraving is better than mine. Except I cannot quite understand the lower, right engraving. What are you trying to show?"

Azon replied:

“ The cross line on top of the three vertical lines is for all the ordinary men. Every ordinary man believes in the "T" symbol. Some believe it to be a hammer. Some believe it to be a cross. The circle on the right shows the wives that most men have. Most wives help their families believe in the Great Spirit. The “T” is for those men who make wives of their daughters. They are the men who still believe the "T" is a hammer, because men who truly believe in the Great Spirit do not use their daughters as wives. The three vertical lines are for the dogs that men who cannot live with women keep for company.

"Grandfather wants this engraving to show that everybody came along. The men with wives are the normal men, the men with daughters are the few who are shunned by everybody, and the men with dogs are the totally isolated loners. Yet they all, everyone, made the walk on the Frozen Trail.”

Pitolo sighed and said, “Well, I have a difficult time seeing the concept. What did you say for the verse?”

Azon turned to start toward the palisade. He said:

“Row on row the sleds went west.
They climbed ice.
They felt through the fog.
They fought bears and came out best.”

Pitolo who was skipping to keep up, said:

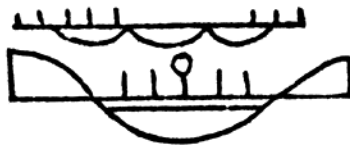
Oh Azon, did you forget your own engraving? Maalan Aarum added the iceberg, the fog, and the bear fight as details to show how difficult the Frozen Trail was. But for our grandsons, grandsons the important thing to remember is that all of them, a big group, walked and walked in the darkness of winter.

Azon retorted, “What are you going to say?”

Pitolo pulled Azon to a halt just before the palisade entrance. He said:

“I tell you it was a big mob, in the darkness.

All in one darkness, to Akomen,
To the west, in the darkness, they walk and walk, all of them.”



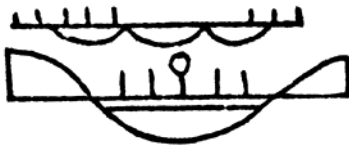
Grandfather was lying on his back with his eyes closed. His left arm was lying on the ground at an angle to his body. His breathing was so shallow Azon could not tell if grandfather was still alive. Azon reached down to pick up the left arm. As he placed it on grandfather's chest, grandfather's eyes opened. He stared at the roof of the tepee for a long time. Then he spoke in a very soft voice. Azon leaned closer to listen. Then Azon said, "He wants to hear our verses. Here, grandfather is mine." Azon said his verse.

Then Pitolo said his verse. Grandfather lay still for a few moments then he pointed to Pitolo.

Grandfather held his left hand up as a signal to see the engravings. He looked at Pitolo's and laid it on his chest. He looked at Azon's and, with his right hand, took it and laid it on the engraving pile. With his left hand he returned Pitolo's engraving.

Then grandfather tried to raise his head. Azon caught him under the shoulders and pulled him into a seating position. Pitolo brought the dipper of water. The two boys sat down and waited as grandfather sipped the water.

Grandfather finally spoke, "Boys, it will not be long now. Our ancestors have reached Merica in our story. But they are only half way to Akomen. The fog in the east is tame compared to a blizzard sweeping off the great ice in the west."



Engraved Stick 3:18

I tell you it was a big mob
In the darkness, all in one darkness
To Akomen, to the [west],
In the darkness
They walk and walk, all of them

FACTUAL FICTION

HORN

Sarsi Migration Myth:

"... when ice was on the water, the people went traveling across it. There was no snow on the ice. Half the people got across. Some were still on the ice and some had not started across. Among those on the ice, a small boy saw a horn imbedded in the ice. He asked his mother to get it for him. He cried. She took a large knife and began to chop it out. When she had nearly released from the ice, the animal (a water monster) moved, and the ice was suddenly broken up." (Curtis, 1928) **(Return to horn place.)**

WORD MEANING

Eyvind: "Ey" is "a gift" or "happiness, good luck" and "vind" means, "the one who wins."