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Miguel Cortereal: The First European to Enter Narragansett Bay*

By EDMUND B. DELABARRE

It was not without hesitation that I was persuaded to submit this paper to critical consideration. This was not because I lacked faith in the soundness of its main conclusions. The real difficulty has been that, dealing as it does with a period of history concerning which the discoverable facts are few and scattered, it has been necessary to rely partially upon possibilities in place of certainties. Yet I have found the study of these possibilities a fascinating pursuit, and they seem so significant to me that I have hope that there may be general agreement that they should not be left unrecorded.

On the other hand, we are not to be confronted with speculative possibilities only. The unquestionable data are enough to establish the central fact indicated in the title of this paper. If that be granted, then it renders highly prob-

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able most, if not all, of the other possibilities which are developed, and thus gives us a welcome glimpse into many interesting details of the early history of this region. Instead of being left with only a scant vision into its condition in 1524, vague rumors of intervening and unrecorded contacts in the interval, then a number of recorded explorations after 1600, and the knowledge which followed the landing of the Pilgrims at Cape Cod and Plymouth in 1620, we now gain in addition a number of somewhat troubled but fairly clear further insights into this earlier period.

In this important anniversary year of our goodly Plantations, it is surely fitting that we should look anew into the question as to who among Europeans was the first to enter Narragansett Bay and to see the shores of Rhode Island. For a long time it was widely believed that the Northmen were clearly entitled to this distinction. From the very first, however, this claim was disputed. No more than about half of the disputants ever accepted the proposition, and it has become increasingly sure that there is no actual proof that the Northmen ever came so far south as New England. Naturally, so long as there is disagreement among eminent scholars, the probabilities favor the shorter distances for their voyages and hence the more northerly latitudes for their landfalls.

If the Northmen are to be excluded from consideration, it has been commonly assumed that Giovanni da Verrazano, in 1524, was the first known European who saw our shores. Probably even before him, however, and certainly during the rest of the sixteenth century after him, considerable numbers of fishermen and traders made unrecorded voyages along the New England coasts.¹ Among numerous other evidences of this, Verrazano himself saw "many plates

¹See E. B. Delabarre, "Dighton Rock," 1928, p. 181; C. McL. Andrews, "The Colonial Period of American History," 1935, chap. 1; C. C. Willoughby, "Antiquities of the New England Indians," 1935, pp. 230-242.

of wrought copper" among the Indians at Newport,² which Mr. Willoughby says "must have been obtained from previous explorers of whom we have no definite account; for although an occasional implement and a few beads wrought from native copper have been found, nothing in the way of metal plates has been recovered in New England which was not made of European copper or brass. Many objects of these foreign metals have been taken from graves belonging to the sixteenth century." The famous Fall River "skeleton in armor," of course, came from one such Indian grave. It is not at all unlikely that the previous explorer who supplied the metal reported by Verrazano may have been the one for whose visit here we are about to survey the evidence.

Ever since the first indication of its possibility came to my notice in 1918, I have been defending the thesis that Miguel Cortereal of Portugal, at some time between 1502 and 1511, is the one to whom can be accorded most reasonably the honor of having been the first European in this vicinity. For reasons which will appear shortly, I have come recently to regard the year 1502 as the most probable date of his arrival. There is no direct documentary evidence to which we can appeal as a ground for this belief. Its credibility rests upon a number of other grounds, some sure and some debatable when taken separately, but all together forming a strong body of facts pointing in the one direction. There is nothing inherently improbable about any of the included features, and the less sure ones gain strength by association with the others. Together they weave into a harmonious and attractive story which connects otherwise

²All known sources (see Note No. 10, below) speak here of "molte lamine (or lame)" of wrought copper. Some translators render this "several pieces," probably under the impression that New England Indians would not have possessed much copper and that such as they had would not be in the form of plates. Hakluyt, however, whom Willoughby follows, and E. H. Hall, translator of the most recently discovered and most reliable version, give Verrazano's meaning correctly when they speak of "many plates."

scattered items and gives them more detail, meaning and importance. It is a story which grows in detail and persuasiveness through the repeated appearance of fresh bits of evidence in its favor. Some such new considerations have developed quite recently. They must be placed in their appropriate setting by giving first a brief review of the series of happenings, and the evidence for them, as these have been made known in my earlier writings.

We know as an historical fact that in 1501 Gaspar Cortereal explored Labrador and Newfoundland. In September the ships separated. Gaspar probably sailed southwards for further exploration, and the others returned home. In the following year, since Gaspar Cortereal had not come back, his brother Miguel set out with three ships in search of him. On reaching Newfoundland, probably in June, they separated, appointing a rendezvous for the 20th of August. The other ships met there, and after waiting vainly for some time for Miguel, returned to Portugal. Here the historical record ends, for nothing further was ever learned about the fate of the two brothers.³

We follow Miguel farther by aid of such new evidence as I have gathered. We may assume that he sailed at once to the south, knowing that his brother had taken that direction. For reasons which follow, we may assume also that, probably in that same year, 1502, his search carried him to Narragansett Bay and thence up the Taunton Great River as far as Assonet Neck. Something of what happened there is related in a tradition which was found current among the Indians of that place by John Danforth in 1680 and by Edward A. Kendall in 1807. I connect this tradition with Cortereal, because it surely relates incidents of the first contact of the local Indians with Europeans, and there are other reasons for believing that this was on the occasion of Cortereal's arrival. If so, then he anchored near the rock which has since then become famous under the name

³Edgar Prestage, "The Portuguese Pioneers," 1933, pp. 272-276.

"Dighton Rock," and which has given rise to so much controversy for more than 250 years. At that time, however, it probably had as yet no inscriptions upon it. Here, according to the tradition, he took Indians into his ship as hostages, and sent men ashore for water. These men were attacked and slain by the natives, very likely because the latter were frightened and angered by the seizure of the hostages. During the conflict firearms were used by men on the ship, the hostages escaped, and the Indian sachem was killed.

For some reason Cortereal settled there among the natives. They were naturally friendly people, "kind and gentle," as Verrazano found them a few years later. After the heat of misunderstanding and conflict was over, Cortereal might readily have gained their confidence. The possession of firearms was an advantage. The other wonderful possessions and proficiencies of the strangers must have caused them to be looked upon as beings of a superior order. Why they interrupted their voyage is not sure. It may have been because of loss of men, or wreckage of the ship, or illness or injuries received, or lateness of the season. Kendall found rumors of a wrecked ship, and of white men passing a winter there long ago, and these rumors may possibly supply a bare outline of further incidents connected with this event, and, as he suggests, explain the reason for the names "White Spring" and "White Man's Brook" which he found attached to a neighboring stream.

Very naturally, having decided to remain here for a time at least, Cortereal promptly made himself sachem of the natives in place of the one who was slain. We shall see reason to believe that he associated with himself a native assistant in government, so that thereafter this tribe, unlike any other around it, was ruled by "two kings" down to the time when the Pilgrims came. We shall find reason also to believe that the strangers found favor with the Indian maidens and contributed to the later population of the tribe. Cortereal himself was still there as late as 1511. But he, and all his companions, either were dead or had gone on

elsewhere by 1524, for otherwise they would certainly have joined Verrazano during his fifteen days' stay in Newport Harbor in that year, and seized this opportunity to return home.

What has been related thus far of events subsequent to Cortereal's known disappearance on the coast of Newfoundland in 1502 is largely surmise, supported by a number of strongly indicative facts. The assumed incidents are accepted as pertinent to our narrative because taken thus they illumine it as a whole, and it gives significance to them. Now we arrive at a fresh item of positive evidence, justifying some features of those surmises. In 1511 Miguel Cortereal cut his name and the date on Dighton Rock. It is only recently that this fact has been discovered, thanks to improved methods of photography. His reason for doing this, I conjecture, was the hope that he might thus attract the attention of some passing explorer and so get taken home. If we ask why he waited so long before making the record and did it so far inland, we can only conjecture that he preferred to maintain his own residence on Assonet Neck and to keep men on the outer coasts on the lookout for possible passing ships; and that only in 1511 did it occur to him to carve these lines, both because thus he would have an additional means of attracting attention, and, if no rescuer came, he would be leaving a record which would endure after his death and reveal his fate. Besides name and date, he engraved also in Latin the statement that he was Dux or sachem of the local Indians. To these records he added the coat-of-arms of the Portuguese King: a shield concentrically within another shield (that is, technically, a "bordered shield"), containing a "five-spot" design which the Portuguese call *quinas* (pronounced keen-as). Just as



THE "QUINAS" AS
INSCRIBED ON
DIGHTON ROCK.
5 BY 7½ INCHES.

our emblem is the "Star-spangled Banner," so that of Portugal is known as the "*Quinas*." If Cortereal's object in making his inscription was what I have suggested, then most certainly he would also have planted a flag near the rock, to attract attention when the rock was covered by the tide, and that flag would undoubtedly have borne the *quinas*.

Some conservative historians and archaeologists are reluctant to accept my reading of the Dighton Rock record. In the latest summary of my researches, in the *Journal of American History* for 1932, I believe that I have proved its authenticity practically beyond question. Still, since there are doubters, as well as because of the intrinsic interest of the additional items to which I appeal in support of it, I have sought for as many as possible of such supporting considerations. Aside from those which have been introduced above, I have called attention in earlier writings to the following favoring arguments. (1) The style of letters and numerals used in the record is characteristic of the period. There is abundant and increasing evidence of this fact. (2) The Wampanoags were a superior race, a fact which might well be accounted for by early white influence and admixture of white blood. It was Wampanoags whom Verrazano found at Newport "most civilized in customs" and with "two kings beautiful in form and stature," for this tribe then owned the Island of Aquidneck; and their intelligence and fine character while under the rule of Massasoit is well known. Verrazano was greatly impressed by them and "formed a great friendship with them;" whereas the nearest other Indians whom he met he speaks of as rude, barbarous and unfriendly. (3) That their custom of having two kings, and the names of some of them in Colonial times, may also be traceable to Cortereal's influence, is another suggestion which I have made before. This is one of the ideas which is about to be developed more fully.

Thus far, I have aimed to indicate in brief outline the nature of the evidence which I had assembled up to the time

when my latest publication upon this subject was issued. Three things in it are wholly or nearly sure: the fact of the voyages and of the disappearance of the two brothers; the presence of Miguel Cortereal's name on Dighton Rock; the probability that the Indian tradition derives from the incidents of his arrival there. However sure it may actually be, this reading of the worn and not easily decipherable Dighton Rock inscription is not by any means entirely clear and is not readily accepted yet by many persons whose opinion is influential. For this reason, although I am now fully convinced of its correctness, I continue to search for fresh items of supporting evidence.

Very recently I have made acquaintance with a new study which increases the probability that Miguel Cortereal may well have explored as far as Narragansett Bay in 1502. In the *Revue Hispanique* for 1903 (vol. X, pp. 485-593), H. P. Biggar has an article on the voyages of the Cabots and of the Corte-Reals. It was the custom of these early explorers to map, as well as they could, the coasts which they discovered, and to give names to all the prominent features. Often it is possible to determine the date of their presence at a particular place, because not infrequently they gave to it the name of the saint whose day it was. Early cartographers gained much of their information about these coasts and names, among other sources, from the masters of the ships which returned from the two Cortereal expeditions of 1501 and 1502. Studying these early maps, Biggar has worked out the itinerary of these two voyages up to the time when, in each case, the accompanying ships started the return home without their leader. What is of interest to us is that, according to him, Gaspar in 1501 made his landfall in Labrador and sailed southward along the coasts as far as Conception Bay in Newfoundland. There he sent home the other two ships, but himself "resolved to continue his exploration of the coast further towards the south," because "he wished to make clear if this really was a mainland and also to find out its connection with the islands discovered by

Columbus near the equator." In the following year, Miguel's vessels separated at the harbor of St. John's for the sake of more thorough exploration. Miguel himself, knowing his brother's intention which naturally he had learned from the ships which returned the year before, would surely have taken the southerly course and penetrated as far as the season permitted.

An earlier historian of the Cortereal voyages, Henry Harrisse, had assumed that Gaspar made his landfall in Newfoundland, explored northward, and was finally lost on the Labrador coast or beyond. In such case, however, Miguel would have searched to the north, not south, and it would be difficult to account for his presence in this region. Biggar's opposite interpretation of Gaspar's actual course and intentions is accepted by a number of recent historians, of whom Edgar Prestage, in "The Portuguese Pioneers," and John B. Brebner, in "The Explorers of North America," are examples. If Gaspar's known plan was to find out the connection between the lands discovered by him and "the islands discovered by Columbus," we can see good reason for Miguel's extension of his vain search as far as Narragansett Bay; and if we assume that he suffered shipwreck or other untoward accident there, besides the serious loss of a considerable number of his men, we would have full explanation of his failure to return to Portugal.

In what follows we are to consider two sets of newly developed ideas which may have real value in support of the Cortereal history as I have developed it, and add something to it. One set rests firmly upon an observation made by Verrazano, but proceeds to draw certain inferences that may be questionable. The other set rests upon speculations regarding the affinities, derivations, and meanings of certain Indian names and titles, and here we are on very uncertain ground. Both are advanced, therefore, not as established fact but as interesting possibilities. If the ultimate decision of those who truly know about these matters should prove hostile to their acceptability, then nothing will

be lost except a hope that they might have been significant. Their withdrawal will not in any way weaken the force of our other lines of evidence. On the other hand, if they are valid in whole or in part, then they add interesting detail and corroboration to the rest of our new chapter in the early history of this region.

The derivation and meaning of Indian names is often a difficult problem, and a perilous one for the amateur to meddle with. Even experts, while sometimes venturing to suggest possible meanings, do so in many cases hesitantly and without agreement among themselves. Under these circumstances, even the amateur's suggestions may have some chance of having hit upon the correct solution. My own knowledge of Indian languages extends very little beyond what this limited study has brought me. For sources, I have looked very little beyond the familiar "Key Into the Language of America," by Roger Williams, the "Indian Grammar Begun," by John Eliot, and the "Natick Dictionary," compiled by J. H. Trumbull and issued as Bulletin 25 of the Bureau of American Ethnology. This superficial study of the early sources applying particularly to this region has led to certain tentative conclusions which appear to my exceedingly restricted knowledge to be at least permissible. I have no hesitation in acknowledging that I have submitted them to the expert judgment of W. B. Cabot of Boston and Dr. Frank G. Speck of the University of Pennsylvania, both of whom find much to criticise. Nevertheless, I still think that they are promising enough to be worth placing on record, and so I do this with cheerful readiness to acquiesce in any fate which may await them if there is any way in which the questions at issue can be positively settled.

Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, there would appear to be little prospect of a decisive conclusion adverse to the suggestions which we are about to submit. Students of Indian dialects as they are spoken now may arrive at opinions which would not hold so surely of the languages as they

were spoken in 1500 or in the early 17th century. Of the languages in 1500 we know nothing positively, except that they can not have been very different from their form when recorded later. Of the dialects spoken in this region in the earliest Colonial times we know only what has been given, with considerable orthographic uncertainty, in such sources as were mentioned above. How did the speech of the Wampanoags differ from that of their neighbors? Not much, of course. Yet Roger Williams remarked, of the Indians with whom he came in contact, that "their Dialects doe exceedingly differ." So far as I have discovered, no one ever recorded the Wampanoag peculiarities of speech, not even the Rev. Samuel Danforth of Taunton, whose "Indian Vocabulary" was founded, apparently, solely upon Eliot's Bible in the Natick dialect. My conclusion is that within narrow limits, using such clues as we have, violating no surely established facts, we are left free to speculate about the etymology and correct orthography of Wampanoag terms as used about 1500 or in Colonial times, and to attach value to our speculations in so far as they co-ordinate wide ranges of fact and offer lucid and probable explanations of otherwise puzzling matters.

The following Table and Notes will help in understanding some of the deductions which follow.

sa	chem	1	sa	chem
saun	chem	2	chepas	sô tam
son	k	squa	3	tah soo tam
sa	kim	au	4	ketas soo t
	keen	omp	5	Massa soi t
Ousame	kin	6		
Wosame	quin	7		
Quade	quin	a	8	

NOTES—(a) It is suggested that the syllables in the second column on the left and the second column on the right, are equivalent forms of the same word or meaning; that is, *sa* = *son* = *soi*, etc. Similarly, in the third column on each side, *chem* = *k* = *kin* = *quin* = *t* = *tam*, etc. Such equivalence is not implied in the other columns.

(b) On the left side of the Table, 2 is a variant of 1 used, among others, by John Danforth in 1680 as a Wampanoag form of the word. 3 is one of many variants meaning "squaw sachem." 4 is a Delaware equivalent of *sagamore*; although in form of a verb ("he is a chief"), Trumbull, in his notes to Williams' "Key," calls it a form of the same word as "sachem." In 5, the *-omp* is used in compounds with the meaning "man"; the whole means "a brave, a captain, a leader." 6 and 7 are two among many different spellings of one name. 8 is another name.

(c) On the right side of the Table, 2 is given by Williams (p. 194) as meaning "dead sachim." 3 and 4 both mean "king"; the *tah*, it is suggested, may imply "lifted up," hence "prominent, great"; the *ketas* is probably equivalent to *kehte*, "great," or even to *kehte-mas*, "great great," the *m* being dropped out as in the similar case of *keht(m)avit*, discussed on a later page. So both 3 and 4 seem to mean "a very great sachem."

(d) "Their language is exceeding copious, and they have five or six words sometimes for one thing" (Williams, in "Directions" prefacing the "Key.")

(e) They have "a curious care of Euphonic" (Eliot, p. 252), leading to many interchanges of vowels and consonants.

(f) They take "delight" in using abbreviations or contractions in the compounding of words (Eliot, pp. 252, 254, 261).

(g) The English transcription of Indian words has been always exceedingly variable and unreliable. For instance, Sidney Rider, in his "Lands of Rhode Island" (1904, pp. 206ff), says that there are not fewer than sixty-five different forms of writing the name "Notaquonckanet."

We may now examine our first set of conclusions, a considerable part of whose justification rests upon what has been given in these foregoing Table and Notes.

1. There were at least four Wampanoag chiefs in early Colonial days whose names ended in the syllable *quin* (or *quina*): Osamequin, Quadequina, Tuspaquin, and Sassaquin. That its *qu* had, sometimes at least, the sound of *k* seems evident from the fact that "Osamequin" was spelled often with terminal *-kin*. Moreover, when followed by the word *squaw*, the *-chem* of *sachem* was abbreviated into *k* alone, much as *squaw* itself often became *squa*, *sq*, or *s*.⁴ These are striking examples of that "delight" in abbrevia-

⁴A dozen or more variants of this word are on record. Some of them are as follows: *Sun-k-squaw*, *sun-ck-squa*, *saun-ck-squa*, *sun-ki-sq*, *son-ku-sq*, *son-k-sq*, *saun-k-s*.

tion to which our Notes referred. This *k*, therefore, seems to form a connecting link between *-chem* and *-quin*, as the left-hand section of our Table indicates. This is the ground for my suggestion that, in compounds, the syllable *quin* or *kin* (equivalent to *-chem*) may have had a meaning by itself, and been used to designate a "chief." Parenthetically we might remark that, if *saun-quin* was one of the allowable combinations, this would not differ greatly in sound from *sahn-quhn*; and this reflection would give some support to my interpretation of the inscription on the Mount Hope rock as reading in part, in Cherokee-Wampanoag variants, *mus-sahn-quhn*, "Chief Sachem."⁵

2. The *Quade-* (or *Korde*) part of "Quadequina" is not very different in sound from *Corte*, nor this from *kehte*. The latter means "great." *Quade-kin* (*Korde-keen*) might thus mean "great chief." This title may well have been applied first to Cortereal, when he made himself Dux of the Indians. It would have been the easiest meaningful term to apply to him, since it suggests his name, origin, and office. When he told them that he was Cortereal, a "Quinas" man, and set up his "Quinas" flag, and carved the "Quinas" on the rock, they would not have understood the "Real" part and perhaps, as was true of some Indian tribes, could not pronounce it.⁶ The rest of it would be plain to them, if I have analyzed the word correctly. He was *Corte-quinas*, *Kehte-keen-omp*, a "great leader." Dr. Speck raises the objection that both *kehte* and *kin* mean "large," and would not combine into a single term. I have in mind, however, the common expedient of conjoining words of similar meaning for growing emphasis. Germans delight in piling up successions of superlatives, like "Aller

⁵See these Collections, 1920, XIII. 1-28; or E. B. Delabarre, "Dighton Rock," 1928, Chap. XI.

⁶The tribes in this region (Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Naticks) had no words including the sounds of *l* or of *r*. Except for four words in use by a tribe living near New Haven, the *Natick Dictionary* lists no words beginning with either of these two letters.

höchst haupt- or ober-" something or other; we speak, humorously, of "heap big chief;" and our Table suggests that Indians may have followed a similar practice, using various forms and combinations of *tah*, *keh-te* or *keh-che*, *mas*, *son*, and *kin*, each perhaps implying something of greatness, to designate in few or many syllables a "great great man." We can do the same kind of thing, if we wish, with similar variation in equivalent terms, as in speaking of "a great big supremely high exalted chief potentate," or anything of the sort. We do it only in derision or in playful exaggeration. The Germans do it seriously. The Indians may have done it in the latter spirit, combining few syllables at a time but being able to vary them widely, as our own Note *d* remarked and as our examples seem to show. Also, it seems to me at least barely possible that, even if the combination to which Speck objects may not have been an entirely natural one for Indians to make, yet it may have been the nearest they could come to understanding "Corte-Quinas." Thus he may have become for them a *keh-te-kin*, or *Quadequimas*, a "great Chief."

One further objection might be raised by one who knows that *keh-te* was applicable as a rule to inanimate objects only, while another forme, *keh-che*, was used for animate beings. But there was at least one exception. They did use *keh-te* in the word *kehtanit*, the "Great Spirit, the Lord God." It seems to have been used also in *ketassoot*, "a very great king." So it might have been appropriate in *keh-te-kin*, implying "a great god-like chief," just as Cortereal must have seemed to them to be.⁷

3. The name Osamequin—spelled in a dozen different

⁷According to an Indian tradition recorded by the Rev. John Heckewelder about 1801, the Indians of Manhattan island, when they first saw Europeans, "took every white man they saw for a Mannitto, yet inferior and attendant to the *supreme Manitto*,"—the latter being the leader of the expedition (New York Historical Society Collections, 1841, 2d ser., vol. 1, p. 71). The same impression must have been made at Assonet Neck, after the fighting was over.

ways—is usually translated "Yellow Feather." If there is any chance that my interpretation of *-quin* is right, then we must seek another meaning for this name. Wosamekin is probably the most nearly correct spelling. Mr. Cabot suggests to me that the first part may be "Wussaume-," and the whole mean "a very great chief." Consulting the Natick Dictionary, I find another possibility. "Wohsumae" means "bright, shining, light-giving." "Wohsumae-kin" may be the "brilliant" or "shining" chief—a sort of Indian Lohengrin. We shall see that there might be in this an implication of a "white chief," a chief of the "white-man's tribe." Whichever derivation may be accepted, this earlier name of the man known to us most familiarly as Massasoit, however it may be spelled, seems to mean either "great chief," or "white chief," and to be a title rather than a personal name.

4. The second part of our Table aims to establish the identity of *soi-* in "Massasoit" with *sa-* in *sachem*, and of *-t* in the former with *-chem* in the latter. Here again Dr. Speck disagrees, saying that the *soo* of two of the connecting words in the Table cannot be identical with *sa* and *soi*. The *-sôtam* of Roger Williams seems so convincing an intermediate link that I leave it for consideration. If it does establish the connection, then with *massa* taking its regular meaning of "great," Massasoit means "great chief" or "Chief Sachem." This is the meaning usually accepted for it (for example, in the "Handbook of American Indians," Bulletin 30 of the Bureau of American Ethnology). So far as I know, however, this suggested identity of its *-soit* with *sachem* has not been pointed out previously. As usual, this interpretation is not the only possible one. Dr. Speck says that much depends upon vowel stress, and the name could mean "he who is first (of all)." In either case, it seems clear that it was a title rather than a personal name, and is one of the many combinations which mean essentially "Chief Sachem."

5. The Wampanoags had two kings, I conjecture, be-

cause originally Cortereal needed a native assistant. The custom continued after his death, which occurred probably before Verrazano met two Wampanoag kings at Newport, "one about forty years old, the other about 24." I suggest that at first they called their two rulers by the titles Kehte-keen as or Kehte-keen, "great god-like chief," (later written Quadequina), and Wohsumae-keen, "white chief" or "brilliant chief," or Wussaume-keen, "very great chief"; and that these titles were transmitted through succeeding generations. It has been objected that, as Roger Williams noted ("Key," p. 194): "They abhorre to mention the dead by name, and therefore if any man beare the name of the dead he changeth his name." But the words in question are not names really, but titles, and hence would have been transmissible. So Dermer in 1619 found at Namasket two chiefs of the tribe, Quade-kin and Wosame-kin; and easily mishearing the last syllable, called them "kings." In Europe it was a frequent custom to speak of native chiefs as kings or emperors,⁸ and this was doubtless why Verrazano did it; but in Dermer's case the reason just given seems at least an added one. At about this time the dual kingship seems to have been abandoned. Wosamekin apparently assumed sole rule, and changed his title to Massasoit. It may be that later again he admitted his son Moanam or Wamsutta to co-rule with himself.⁹ The Narragansetts appear to have copied this custom of having two rulers in one instance, noted by Roger Williams in 1643 ("Key," p. 132). After Massasoit's death, Wamsutta (Alexander) and Philip were again, one after the other, sole rulers or "kings."

⁸Many examples are noted on pages 25 to 74 in "Some Indian Events of New England," by Allan Forbes; State Street Trust Company, Boston, 1934.

⁹A. G. Weeks, "Massasoit," 1919, p. 132. One is tempted to wonder whether it may not be possible that *Wamsutta*, through such influences as were referred to in our Notes *d*, *e* and *f*, could be equivalent to Wampisoo-tam, "White Chief."

In this first set of newly developed considerations we have tried to show that a good case can be made out for regarding the three words "Quadequina," "Wosamekin," and "Massasoit" as titles rather than as personal names; as practically equivalent to one another in essential meaning ("great chief"); as not improbably conveying some implication of Cortereal's presence and leadership; and, if these things are true, as giving a plausible explanation of the reason why this one tribe was ruled by two kings for about a hundred years.

From these dubious but intriguing excursions into etymology, this attempt to read history by analysis of individual names, we pass now to a new set of considerations. These have the advantage of starting off, at least, with a definite but puzzling historical fact. Although we proceed to further deductions, yet these seem to be fairly well-justified inferences from that fact.

1. The Wampanoags were actually, in part, a white people. We have early and positive evidence of this, the significance of which seems to have been always overlooked because not understood. Listen to Verrazano: "This is the most beautiful people and the most civilized in customs that we have found in this navigation. They excel us in size; they are of a bronze color, some inclining more to whiteness, others to tawny color."¹⁰

¹⁰Verrazano's report to Francis I of France seems to have been written possibly in Latin and has never been found in its original form. Three versions of it in nearly contemporary Italian translation are known. The most recently discovered and reliable of them, the "Cellere Codex," was first published in 1909. It was republished, both in Italian original (edited by Prof. Alessandro Bacchiani) and in English translation (by E. H. Hall), with an introduction and full comparisons with the other versions, in the 15th Annual Report of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1910, pages 135-220. Our quotation is from this source, page 190.

The three versions of this passage differ somewhat. "Handsomest in their costumes" instead of "most civilized in customs," and "of a very fair complexion" instead of "of a bronze color," are the most important differences. All three agree, however, in the statement of most interest to

Their "fair complexion" does not imply that they were blonds. Verrazano says specifically that they had black hair and sharp black eyes. They were white men in the same sense that dark South-European races are white men. No other New England tribe has ever been described in this manner. How could they be "white"? The fact certainly suggests, almost proves, that there was a rich harvest of goodly youths resulting from the domestic tastes of this Portuguese group who passed a winter or more among these people some 22 years before Verrazano's visit in 1524. In the light of Verrazano's testimony, Cortereal's name on Dighton Rock, doubted by some critics, becomes more nearly certain, and attests that it was his party and not some other one of which we have no such evidence as we have for him, that was responsible for the "whiteness" of some of the Wampanoags, and for the copper (or brass) plates seen in their possession. Within another three or four generations this whiteness seems to have been bred out, for no one in Colonial times remarked upon their difference in complexion from other Indians.

2. In the light of Verrazano's description it seems reasonable that the name WAMPANOAG may well mean "White People," and derive from Cortereal's chieftainship. They were ruled by a white "Dux," as he himself asserts, and soon some of them also were white men. Trumbull's derivation of this tribal name¹¹ appears to be widely accepted: from *wampan-ohke*, "Eastlanders," or

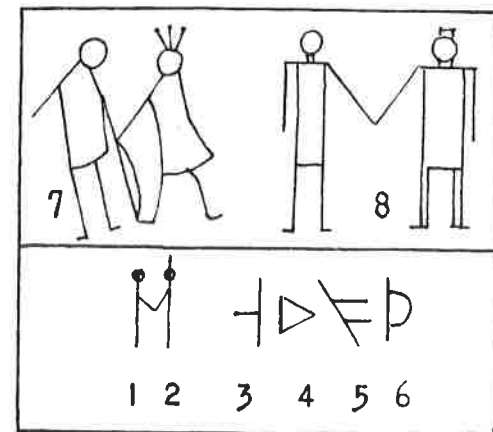
us: "some inclining more to whiteness (*bianchezza*)." This implies a whiteness like that of Verrazano's own men; for *bianchezza* is the term used to describe it in both cases. The Indians at two other places farther south showed great astonishment at the *bianchezza* of the skin of these Europeans; some of the Wampanoags inclined to a like *bianchezza*. Verrazano was evidently much interested in this matter of skin-color, and no other Indians, south or north of Newport, impressed him as having a like whiteness, although some elsewhere were lighter than others.

¹¹In *Natick Dictionary*, p. 250; and in his notes to Roger Williams' "Key," Narragansett Club edition, p. 6.

"Eastern People." Dr. Speck advocates a similar interpretation. But I venture to suggest that in spite of the widespread application of this term, or one of similar form and meaning to various eastern tribes (Wapanachki or Abenaki of Delaware and Maine), it may not be the correct reason for the naming of the Wampanoags. There is an alternative derivation, closer in sound to the word as we know it. *Wampi* or *wompi* means "white"; and *-nâuog* is the combining form for "people" used several times by Roger Williams ("Key, pp. 52, 59, 60). The Wampi-nâuog are the "white people,"—some of them white in fact, and once ruled by a white chief.

3. The existence on Assonet Neck of a "White Spring" and a "White Man's Brook," so named because of these early incidents, becomes somewhat more significant if these interpretations are correct, and gives a small degree of added strength to them.

4. Very little weight can be given to a new possibility that I am about to suggest. But it is a possibility, and one interesting enough to be placed on record in this connection. To make it clear, a small Figure is inserted below. Some years ago I described a bannerstone found in Warren, bearing four incised characters which seem to suggest that the



Wampanoags were beginning to develop an ideographic system of writing at about the period of King Philip's chieftainship. A definite reading of these characters was hesitantly suggested.¹² I can now add a few small hints which help to corroborate that reading. There is a petroglyph preserved at the restored old Aptuxet Trading Post of the early Plymouth settlers, at Bourne on Cape Cod.¹³ Its pictographs are so obscured as to be almost completely illegible. But the characters numbered 1, 2 in our Figure are fairly clear. They rather obviously mean "a white man and an Indian shaking hands." Although much simpler, they are not very different in essence from the rendering of a similar idea in two other cases: on the well-known William Penn wampum belt, and in case of the two human figures carved on Dighton Rock at the extreme left-hand end.¹⁴

The pictographs on the Bourne stone were carved probably sometime after 1658, and therefore at about the period of the bannerstone. The characters on the latter are shown as Nos. 3 to 6 in our Figure. The designs on Dighton Rock and on the Penn belt appear in the same Figure as Nos. 7 and 8. These have been drawn free-hand from designs which in the original are not entirely clear and unambiguous in minor details, and so, in these reproductions, they may be defective in some respects. But the main idea in each is correctly conveyed. Apparently feathers are used to identify the Indian on Dighton Rock and on the Bourne stone, and a hat and trousers to indicate a European on the Penn belt. The figures of the latter are in bead-work, solidly blocked in; but for convenience we show them only in out-

¹²These Collections, 1919, vol. 12, p. 96.

¹³New Bedford Standard-Times, March 17, 1935, Section 4, page 1; Old-Time New England, 1936, XXVI, 110-112.

¹⁴I assume that the Indian pictographs on Dighton Rock were made at various times between about 1600 and 1675. The date of the Penn belt is supposed to be 1682; see *Memoirs of the Hist. Soc. of Penn.*, vol. 3, p. 207, and *Second Annual Report, Bureau of Amer. Ethnology* (for 1880-1881), p. 253.

line. On Dighton Rock, the pictures are so worn and obscure that they were never seen correctly until my flashlight photographs revealed them. But there is no question now that they were cut about as I have represented them, although their worn condition makes it uncertain whether the European was drawn with hat or other distinguishing marks.

In the two cases last mentioned (Dighton and Penn) we have examples of the stage of complete pictography. The Bourne characters here copied are greatly simplified pictographs expressing a similar thought. It is evident that a little further simplification might develop them into ideographs, in which the original pictorial resemblance to the objects portrayed is entirely lost. Such abbreviated symbolism was not wholly foreign to Indian practice in some places. It is a well-known feature of many designs occurring on their baskets, blankets, and pottery.

Assuming that this occurred, and that our interpretation of the word Wampanoag as meaning "white people" is correct, we have a fairly secure basis for a reasonable interpretation of the ideographs of the bannerstone. A short straight line might readily have been the simplified sign adopted to designate "man." The same idea is expressed in almost that simple manner on the Bourne stone. If so, then the addition of an emphasizing side-mark against it, as in No. 3, might mean "chief-man, sachem." Two such lines, placed now horizontally and connected by a projecting diagonal, as in No. 5, might mean "a connected group of men, a tribe or people." Character 6 is much like Philip's ordinary signature. In the light of all we know about this ceremonial stone, which we have reason to believe was Philip's own, these are fairly natural assumptions. Together, they rather surely indicate that the remaining character, No. 4, must have been an ideograph for "white." It would not have been inappropriate to represent this idea by a blank space marked off by bordering lines. On birch-bark or paper, which may have been used in developing

ideographs, it would be white. On these assumptions, the inscription would read "Chief Sachem of the Wampinâuog, Philip;" that is: "Philip, Sachem of the White People." This speculation seems to me to contribute some small degree of support to my other arguments. It is not in the least essential to them, and anyone who prefers to dismiss it as too fanciful should not let it affect his judgment of the more convincing evidence that has been presented. If it has no other value, it at least gives some few suggestions concerning the possible evolution of an ideographic system.

That Miguel Cortereal came to this vicinity in or about 1502, and, because of some untoward circumstance which prevented his return to Portugal, made himself ruler of the Wampanoag Indians, is proved indubitably by his known history and by the presence of his name and message on Dighton Rock. Some incidents connected with his arrival here are almost certainly revealed through an old Indian tradition. A number of additional reasons for accepting these statements as historical facts have been given in my earlier writings. To them I am now adding a group of new considerations. One is the indication given by Biggar of the reason for Cortereal's far search to the south, and the resulting probability that he arrived here in 1502 rather than in 1511, as I had previously assumed. A second is Willoughby's assertion that Verrazano's observation of metal plates among the Indians is a proof that some other explorer had been here before him. A third has been an examination of the degree to which certain Indian names or titles can be taken as indicative of Cortereal's former leadership and as explanatory of the dual kingship. And a fourth has been the development of the probability that the Wampanoags had an infusion of white blood which can have derived only from the members of Cortereal's expedition.

Among all these considerations there is a considerable and satisfying nucleus of solid facts. Around them we have gathered a number of other scattered facts which, taken

alone by themselves, would have little significance or interest. By aid of certain inferences, we have sought to give them their simplest explanation and reasonable connectedness. Even though some of the inferences may be questionable and perhaps some of them may have to be abandoned in the light of better knowledge, still a great many of them, if not all, are certainly permissible and in some cases unavoidable. Together, fact and justifiable inference fitting into a harmonious structure, they add a new chapter of absorbing interest to the pre-Colonial history of the Wampanoags, and prove that Miguel Cortereal and his companions were the earliest known Europeans who came into Narragansett Bay and explored the coasts of Rhode Island.

Notes

A collection of 123 Indian arrow points and spear points found on the west bank of the Kickamuit River in Warren about 1870 have been bequeathed to the Society by the late Jonathan Barney of Barrington.

The following persons have been elected to membership in the Society: Mrs. Walter I. Sweet, Miss Hattie O. E. Spaulding and Miss Muriel McFee.

New Publications of Rhode Island Interest

Judge Sewall's Gifts in the Narragansett Country by Caroline Hazard is a pamphlet of 23 pages.

Life and Times of Judah Touro by David C. Adelman is a pamphlet of 13 pages.

An article on the *Mawdsley House* by Maud L. Stevens appears in the July issue of the Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society.

Early Land Holders of Watch Hill, by Reginald E. Peck is a booklet of 27 pages with two plates.

A map of *Western Warwick, The Pawtuxet Valley of R. I.*, drawn by Charles A. Keller, has been printed by the *Pawtuxet Valley Daily Times*.