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Templar Knights in North America?

by Charles Hughes

Swords at Sunset: Last Stand of North America's Grail Knights

by Michael Bradley with Joelle Lauriol
Ancaster, Ontario: Manor House
Publishing, 2006
Paperback, 240 pp., \$24.95

S*words at Sunset* was written in an attempt to prove that America was discovered in 1398 by the Scotch prince Henry Sinclair of Roslyn, Scotland. According to author Bradley, a settlement was set up in what later became Nova Scotia, Canada, with colonists consisting of refugee Templar Knights who were fleeing persecution by the French and English kings.

That America was discovered by an expedition led by Prince Henry 100 years before Columbus is not exactly a new idea; it has been debated for the last 400 years, since the publication of a book and maps by the Venetian Niccolo Zeno ("The Zeno Narrative"). However, to push the controversy further, Bradley claims that the expedition and subsequent colonies were largely Scotch Templar Knights. Bradley is obsessed with the legends concerning the Templar Order and the Holy Grail, whatever that may be.

As readers may have noticed, a flood of books, films, and television programs has appeared since the publication of the book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, in 1981. These books, along with other fungus productions, conspire to bring about a cultural change in America and Europe by pushing feudalism and a new Dark Age.

The themes here are the Holy Grail, revisionist Christianity, pagan cults, and speculation about oligarchical family trees. That the Crusades of the European Middle Ages were a curse upon humanity, a promoter of genocide and the destruction of civilization, no one actually familiar with history can deny! Military orders such as the Knights Templar and the Knights of Malta were leaders and organizers at the behest of the oligarchy of this sorry mess. The so-called Republic of Venice was the controller of the feudal system.

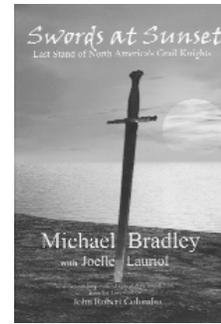
Aside from Bradley's feudal and pagan outlook, he has done some serious antiquarian investigations over the last 20 years, looking at strange ruins and artifacts in the United States and Canada. In other words, he may have made some genuine and important historical discoveries of pre-Columbian history.

Bradley received a letter in December 1981, requesting that he come and investigate a strange ruin on the letter-writer's property in Nova Scotia, which resembled the remains of a castle or fort of stone-rubble-type construction, a common style in medieval Europe. The location of the ruin was a town northwest of Halifax, Nova Scotia, called The Cross.

Bradley went to see the ruin, taking photos of the walls and looking around the area for objects. He urged the Nova Scotia government's Ministry of Recreation, Culture, and Fitness to conduct an investigation, reporting that the ruins could very well be medieval European, built by religious refugees fleeing persecution. And, yes, they could be relics of the Sinclair expedition of 1398, as well.

Bradley's secondary axiom was that the historical Templars were Christian heretics, many of whom were given refuge in Scotland by King Robert the Bruce, after their suppression in 1307 by the French King Philip le Bel and the Pope.

A few years later, Bradley was informed of another possible Scotch ruin located on the Vermont-Quebec border, near Lake Mephremogog. People living around the lake had dug up artifacts in the course of house construction. One find was an iron spearhead, but the major anomaly there was a gigantic stone dam, some cut blocks of which weighed a ton or more. Stakes of spruce wood used to lay out the structure were discovered under the dam and, subjected to radio carbon dating, were found to be at least 500 years old, a date prior to French settlement of the area. Nearby, a stone carving of a gargoye was also dis-



covered in a style possibly Scotch or Norse. This discovery was filmed for a television documentary.

The Zeno Connection

The old book mentioned above was supposedly written at the time of the alleged Sinclair discovery in 1398, by a Venetian sailor who was employed as the leader of the Sinclair fleet of ships.¹ The book was discovered 160 years later in Italian, and soon English editions came out. It gave an account of a voyage from Scotland to the Atlantic coast of Canada of several ships and seamen, and more than a hundred fighting men. Landfalls were cited on Iceland, Greenland, a place called Friesland (still not identified), and an island or peninsula called in the narrative Esstiltoland, which is thought to be modern Nova Scotia.

This Zeno narrative, with its maps, has been disputed for the last 400 years, so, beware, as this book was written by one of the leading oligarchical families of Venice. Nevertheless, Henry Sinclair had good reasons to attempt an Atlantic crossing when he did, because Henry possessed a significant fleet of ocean-going ships, which also served the rulers of Norway; he was a vassal of Norway, having the title Earl of Norway.

In this period, Scotland looked toward the north, and not toward England. Norway at this time pulled, or had controlling influence over, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Greenland. The Zeno family and their country, Venice, wished to take part in the extensive and profitable trade in fish, timber, furs, and seal oil. Venice was cut off from its eastern trade, because it was blockaded by the Turks, who suspected that Venice was running the Crusades against Turkey.

Perhaps Venice wanted to be part of a North Atlantic empire which would outflank the Hanseatic league, which had a

monopoly on the North Sea trade. Fishing grounds were all controlled by rivals, and of course fish were very important in the Middle Ages, when the Church forbade the consumption of meat during Lent and other numerous fast days.

Henry Sinclair could also have had accurate information on North America from his contact with Norway, including maps. One such map, included in the Zeno Narrative, was studied by map expert Arlington Mallery, and featured as a chapter in his book *The Rediscovery of Lost America* (Dutton, 1979). On the Zeno map of the North Atlantic, Greenland is shown correctly positioned as to longitude and latitude, and is shown without ice, consisting of three islands, a fact confirmed in modern times by seismic studies.

Mallery said that this must be a genuine map, predating the Middle Ages, of possibly Arab or Phoenician origin. He claims that a map can be the oldest writ-

ten record, and may precede knowledge of writing. So the Zeno map looks like it may be real, though anomalous, even if the text may not be reliable.

The Narrative relates that Prince Sinclair took a flotilla of ships and a large crew of at least 100 fighting men, whom Bradley assumes were Templar Knights. Sinclair may have been tired of supporting these people who, since they had been condemned by the Pope and the Inquisition, were best sent West to set up a colony.

Prince Henry returned to Scotland in 1399, and was killed in a battle that year. The majority of the colonists remained in Nova Scotia, the initial settlement being at The Cross near Halifax, or perhaps at a place called Green Oaks. The area that most fits the description of the Zeno Narrative is the modern town of Stellerton, Nova Scotia, which has an exposed oil spring and gold-bearing beach sands, both items mentioned in the Narrative. This spring is a good indi-

cation that the Narrative refers to Nova Scotia, because there are only two such oil springs in North America (the other is in Los Angeles).

Bradley says that the colony, or several colonies, kept moving west to avoid other Europeans after the 1500s. Were these Scottish Templar Knights finally wiped out by the expanding onslaught of the Iroquois? Bradley thinks so, and thinks that the final battles were fought in the Rochester, New York, area, and in the area around St. Catherine's Ontario, no later than 1570. The major battle took place, according to Bradley, right where the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) place the battle of Cumorah, near Palmyra, New York. Could the family of Joseph Smith, the Mormon founder, have been survivors of this battle, and picked up an account of it from his ancestors?

Notes

1. The "Zeno Narrative" can be found in the *New England Antiquities Research Association Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Fall 1998.

North American Evidence of Pre-Columbus Voyages

Etruscan Explorers

by Warren W. Dexter

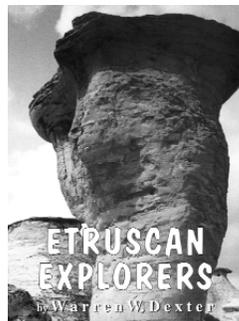
Self-published

Hardcover, 63 pp., \$28.50 order@book-masters.com 1 (800) 247-6553

Warren Dexter's passion has been to create a photographic record of ancient sites in America and other countries, to preserve these artifacts for future generations, at least in pictures. Now 95, Mr. Dexter has made a selection of his thousands of photos available to the general public in this small book, *Etruscan Explorers*.

As the dustjacket to his book quotes him, "I'm not a verbiage writer but a graphic specialist." The frontispiece reinforces this, proclaiming: "This book is a graphic story board of the records left behind by Ancient Explorers. This is *not* in an academic or literary format, but the pictures tell the story." And so they do.

Most spectacular is the subject of the cover photo and several inside photos, the Milk River sculptured heads located in Alberta, Canada, about 10 miles up the river from the U.S. border. Sadly, the Canadian government did not see fit to preserve this ancient site, and pieces of



it have fallen into the Milk River, so Dexter's photos, taken in 1982, take on an increased importance. Vandals also demolished one of the sculptured heads with bullet holes, using the sculpture as a target.

These tall pillars are located on a cliff about 65 feet above the river. The base of one pillar has Ogam writing inscribed in a circular pattern. Using a montage of Dexter's photographs, Dr. Barry Fell deciphered the vowel-less Ogam which tells of using the flight of migrating birds to prophesy the future. It describes the same divination procedure attributed to the ancient Etruscans.

That same pillar has a sculpted

Caucasian head, and next to it is another, smaller pillar with a sculpted Negro head, similar in style to the Olmec sculpted figures in Central America. (This is what you see clearly in the 1982 photos, although now both pillars are damaged.)

Dexter shows in his photos the only two places that the raised letter Ogam, spelling out the name of the god Baal, is found: in ancient (9th Century B.C.) Etruscan hut urns, used for cremated ashes, and on a Milk River dolmen monument, not far from the pillars described above. Hence the name of his book.

Among the other unique photographs are some of ancient Zulu artifacts. One of these is an ancient gold trading stone which has six different alphabets, including Ogam.

The author has written and contributed to other books about ancient America, including sites in his home state of Vermont. But there are thousands of unpublished photos in Warren Dexter's archive. It is hoped that enough people will be intrigued by this volume to support the publication of more of Mr. Dexter's photographs.

—Marjorie Mazel Hecht