

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA
A HISTORY OF CONFLICTING THEORIES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When one is asked the question, "Who discovered America?", many people will answer "Christopher Columbus." Yet, if these people's study of the discovery of America was limited to the facts of Columbus's expeditions, they have deluded themselves, for if by "discovery" we mean he was the first to set foot on the soil of North or South America, Columbus did not discover the New World. When Columbus reached San Salvador on October 12, 1492, he was greeted by a tribe of friendly natives. Were they the first inhabitants? Possibly they were, but many disagree.

Controversy over the discovery of America has indeed been a history of conflicting theories, for various authors and scholars have asserted, at one time or another, that the Mongols, Phoenicians, Chinese, Irish, Norse, and Welsh all made the discovery centuries before Columbus was ever born.

This historiographic study will seek to examine extensively the origins of each of these theories, trace its historical development down through the years, and relate

the current status of each theory. In addition, each theory will be critically examined in order to determine its validity.

Admittedly this type of study has its limitations. The story of ancient explorations cannot be compiled out of the journals and reports of the actual travellers, which have only survived in the rarest instances. It must be pieced together out of scattered allusions and descriptions in the general literature of Greece, Rome, and elsewhere. Yet enough information has survived to enable one to piece together a fairly accurate picture of what supposedly took place at the time of each "discovery."

It should be stated that this study does not seek to add any new dimension or interpretation to the existing theories. It is hoped, however, that the process of critical examination and evaluation of all the major pre-Columbian theories (at one time and in one place), based solely on the available evidence, will help any interested person to understand and appreciate the complex nature of the question under consideration, and possibly serve as a stimulus for further investigation.

CHAPTER II

THE MONGOL DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

Columbus was nearly certain that the island which he named San Salvador was only a bit of land lying off the coast of Asia, despite the fact that he found little gold and no jewels or spices. The natives found occupying this land, whose hair was straight and raven black, who had high cheek bones, prominent noses, and bronze or copper-colored skins, were called "Indians" by Columbus because he was so sure he had reached some outlying part of India.¹

Since that October day in 1492, controversy over the origin of the aboriginal inhabitants of the American continent has persisted. Widely varying hypotheses, which are discussed later in this chapter, have been woven about the origin, and leave most people in a state of confusion. Thorough examination of this theory, however, should eliminate any confusion that may exist.

The first mention of a possible origin for America's aboriginal inhabitants comes from the Roman Catholic Church

at the beginning of the 16th century. The church reasoned that since the Bible mentioned no separate creation in an American Garden of Eden, the forebears of the red man must therefore have come from the Old World. And, as early as 1512, Pope Julius II declared officially that the Indians were descended from Adam and Eve.² For many years thereafter, the Indians were considered as children of Babel driven back into the stone age because of their sins.

Many years later, in 1590, a Spanish cleric, José de Acosta, put on paper an ingenious theory for the populating of the Americas. Acosta contended that the first people came to the Indies by shipwreck and bad weather;³ however, he felt the need of a land route to take care of the animals on Noah's Ark, so Acosta postulated that Noah let the animals out in western Asia. Finally, Acosta ventured the opinion that somewhere in the north, explorers would ultimately find a portion of America joined with some corner of the Old World, and, in this way, the animals and man had come to the New World.⁴

Acosta's theory began a wave of new hypotheses on the subject, the foremost of which appeared in 1607. Fray Gregoria Garcia published a volume which stated that some Americans descended from the Carthaginians, some from the Lost Tribes of Israel, Atlantis, Greece, and Phoenicia,

and still others from the Chinese, Tartars, and other groups.⁵ This theory, as well as other similar inconclusive ones, received little notice, however.

In 1614, a book by Edward Brerewood appeared which depicted bears and Tartars crossing to the New World at a point where Asia and America "are one continent with the other, or at most, disjoined but at some narrow channell of the ocean."⁶

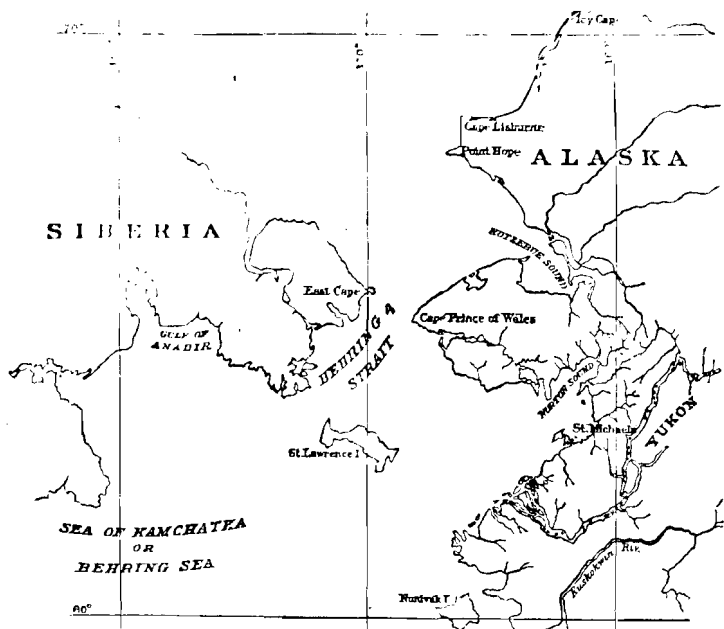
Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

After publication of Brerewood's book, the theory began to display two significant recurring themes: 1) that migration from the Old to New World was occurring in the north where a land-bridge or narrow gap of water existed, and 2) that the peoples migrating were of Tartar (or Mongol) origin. In fact, this last point was greatly emphasized by the great Alexander von Humboldt in 1811 when he stated that he recognized a striking similarity between Americans and the Mongol race.⁷

Other theories did appear in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including that of Augustus Le Phongeon, who theorized that the people of Atlantis populated America,⁸ and Elliot Smith, who asserted that all the cultures of the world stemmed from the Egyptians, who had migrated to the

continent and founded the civilizations of Middle and South America.⁹ Few of these theories were accepted then or now by scholars or geologists as existence of lost continents thousands of years ago has been refuted by historians and ridiculed by geologists.¹⁰

Most anthropologists today believe that man first came to the New World via the Bering Strait, a map of which appears below.¹¹



This theory is supported by the results of research carried out on the basis of physical anthropology, since these immigrants purportedly bore striking resemblance to the Mongolian peoples of Asia. Research in physical anthropology is widely supported by geography and archaeology, with the Bering Strait being the most likely crossing point. The oldest archaeological remains have been found in the

north and not the south of the North American continent, and the more ancient remains, until recently, have been found near the Strait.¹²

Many authors agree with this theory, including Geoffrey Ashe, who believes that the huge icesheets which covered much of North America had absorbed enough water to lower sea levels by two or three hundred feet. Thus, the Asian-American land-bridge was formed and the pioneer migrants crossed over, eventually developing a character of their own and ceasing to be Asians.¹³

Edward Fontaine believes the Asians were driven over the land-bridge by such terrible conquerors as Genghis Khan, who exterminated all the clans who resisted his power.¹⁴

While most authors and anthropologists agree as to the origin of these peoples, there is wide disagreement on when this occurrence took place. Several authors and scholars voice opinions on probable dates, including Clark Wissler, dean of American anthropologists, who said, "the first great migration of Old World peoples to the New can be set down as not only beginning but culminating within the limits of late Pleistocene time."¹⁵ This opinion concurs with that of Geoffrey Ashe in The Quest For America.¹⁶

During the past 100,000 years, glacialists believe

there were three periods of time when inland ice melted sufficiently to allow the southward passage of both animals and man: 1) more than 75,000 years ago, in the Sangamon Interglacial period before the time when the last, or Wisconsin, glaciation had covered the plains of Canada; 2) about 40,000 years ago, during the Wisconsin, when a corridor probably opened along the eastern foothills of the Rockies, and another, perhaps a little later, down the plateau between the northern Rockies and the Coast Range; and 3) between 15,000 and 20,000 years ago when the final retreat of the ice sheets began in those same regions.¹⁷

Archaeologists have held back more than the physical anthropologists from the acceptance of a variegated array of early man at quite early dates. Dr. Alex Hrdlicka, then of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, reasoned man had come to America not before 3500 B.C. and his finds of skulls and bones corroborated his theory to the extent that his opinion for a time became the final pronouncement on any new evidence.¹⁸

Yet, new discoveries would literally destroy Hrdlicka's theory, the first of which was made in 1926 in Folsom, New Mexico. The weapons of an ancient man, later termed the "Folsom Man," were found by a Colorado Museum of Natural History team that had been digging out Pleistocene mammals.

An arrow or dart point was found in place in the ribs of a fossil bison and Carbon-14 dating proved the point to be 10,000 years old.¹⁹

A protagonist of the theory of the Folsom Man was Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts of the Smithsonian Institution. By 1944, however, Roberts finally gave in and stated that his belief was that the Folsom complex developed towards the end of the Pleistocene, or Late Glacial, period and carried over into the beginning of the Recent is now more or less generally accepted.²⁰

In 1936, the bones of a fifteen year-old female, later termed the "Minnesota Man," were turned up by a crew of roadworkers industriously scraping away at a trench being readied to carry a roadbed across an ancient glacial lake long since gone. The soil, unfortunately, had been disposed of and an exact date of the remains could not be determined, although Dr. A. E. Jenks of the University of Minnesota dated the bones as 20,000 years old.²¹ Opinion on this find remains divided.

The next find was made in the 1940's in a remote cave in the Sandia Mountains in New Mexico, not far from where the Folsom Man's weapons were found. A geologist from Harvard, Kirk Bryan, discovered evidence in the strata of the cave floor of human habitation 25,000 years ago.²² Bryan

suffered a great deal of scorn, but he held his ground and continued to support his conclusions, later termed the "Sandia Man."

As more finds were made in the late 1940's and early 1950's, and as evidence continued to accumulate, the great majority of anthropologists had swung over into the camp which was open-minded enough to accept an age of 25,000 years or so. Dr. Hrdlicka had already passed from the scene, but younger men with similar viewpoints arose to take his place in criticizing past finds and newer ones as well.

This criticism was short-lived, however, for a remarkable discovery was made in 1955 in Tule Springs, Nevada. Some charcoal samples taken from an ancient hearth were Carbon-14 dated to around 23,800 years. In the opinion of author Charles Boland, here was incontrovertible proof of the existence of Ice-Age man in North America.²³ Later radiocarbon dating of the site in 1961 produced a new date of at least 28,000 years and perhaps as much as 32,000 years.²⁴

Even older evidence was to be discovered the following year at Lewisville, Texas, in Denton County. An amateur archaeologist, Wilson W. Crook, Jr., discovered a Clovis fluted point and charred vegetal material in a hearth that Carbon-14 dated to greater than 38,000 years.²⁵ The

astonishing age of this material has puzzled many archaeologists, who, unable to believe that a Clovis point (or any kind of stone projectile point) can be that old, have chosen to reject the radiocarbon dates as hopelessly inaccurate.²⁶

Scholar Alex Krieger pointed out, however, that:

. . . there are alternate explanations, among them the distinct possibility that the Clovis point was planted in the hearth by someone not connected with the excavation or that, by some incredible accident, machinery used to excavate the huge borrow pit in which this and other hearths were exposed somehow caused the point to be dragged or lowered to this position.²⁷

Krieger concluded that:

At any rate, those who reject the dates completely ignore the geology and paleontology of the hearths and their contents, which are in full accord with the radio carbon dates. If the Clovis point is set aside as an unsolvable problem, Lewisville remains one of the most exciting and important archaeological discoveries ever made in America.²⁸

Controversy over the Lewisville site continued, but in 1961, the latest and possibly oldest discovery was made in American Falls, Idaho, which tended to overshadow any discussion concerning the Lewisville site. Bones of a very large bison in which round holes were punched, probably with wooden spears, and pelvic bone cut with a sharp tool, were uncovered. One Carbon-14 dating was taken and revealed the age of the remains to be greater than 30,000 years and possibly 43,000 years.²⁹ Continued research into this find

still is in progress and no newer information is available as of this paper's writing.

Critique on Validity of the Theory

After extensive research, it is possible for one to make several observations and conclusions concerning the Mongol theory. First, the changes in the area of land and water which have taken place since the progenitors of man appeared on the earth are not known, and any hypothesis must take this uncertainty into account.

Second, available evidence seems to confirm that successive waves of migration occurred to America over a period of hundreds of years, and that these successive bodies of immigrants differed to some extent in culture and race.³⁰ In fact, some anthropologists count up to eight different racial groups among those who infiltrated into America, and linguists have produced similar evidence.³¹

Third, the evidence seems to confirm that the earliest immigrants were of relatively low cultural traits, while the late-comers, who most likely crossed the Pacific by boat, brought with them an array of cultural traits.³²

Fourth, the probability that the earliest of these peoples were of Mongolian descent seems likely. This conclusion is based on the following reasons: 1) the ancient

ruins of these peoples resemble those which are scattered over Mongolia and other parts of central Asia, and their outlines identify them as the work of the same race; 2) an evidence of their Tartar origin is the universal practice of scalping their enemies, the custom observed by their ancestors, the Scythians, who dominated all of Russia in Europe and Asia; and 3) the Esquimaux, who occupy the shores of the Arctic Ocean from Davis's to Bering's Straits, in physiognomy, manners and customs, show their blood relationship to all the dwarfish and fur-clad Hyperboreans of the Eastern Hemisphere.³³

Fifth, once established, these earliest immigrants seemed to develop a character of their own and ceased to be Asians. The break with the ancestral homeland, confirmed by the sea, was total. There is no proof that anyone in Asia long remembered the wanderers' departure, or wondered what became of them.³⁴

Lastly, the approximation of Asia and America at the Bering Strait lends probability to the theory of a crossing and little evidence of any worth has been given to refute the possibility that people like the present-day Esquimaux, or people lower in scale, might not make their way along this temporary land-bridge and subsist on the marine animals which probably swarmed along its borders.³⁵

For all of the aforementioned reasons, and, on the basis of the evidences, and the Carbon-14 datings of them, from the 1926 Folsom Man to the 1961 American Falls discovery, it seems safe to conclude that the Mongol theory of discovery and settlement of the Americas is valid.

NOTES

¹Olive Beaupre Miller, The Story of Mankind (Lake Bluff, Illinois: The Book House For Children, 1963), IV, pp. 31-2.

²Kenneth MacGowen, Early Man in the New World (New York: Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 10.

³José de Acosta, Natural and Moral History of the Indies, trans. Edward Grimston, (1604), ed. Clements R. Markham (N.p.: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), pp. 45, 57.

⁴MacGowen, Early Man, p. 10.

⁵Ibid., p. 12, citing Fray Gregorio Garcia's The Origin of the Indians of the New World (N.p.: 1607), I, p. 315.

⁶MacGowen, Early Man, p. 11, citing Edward Brerewood's Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages, and Religions, Through the Chief Parts of the World (N.p.: 1614), pp. 96-7.

⁷Alexander von Humboldt, Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain, trans. John Black, reprint of 1822 edition (New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 153,155.

⁸Augustus Le Phongeon, Archaeological Communication on Yucatan (Worcester, Massachusetts: 1879), p. 25.

⁹Elliot Smith, Elephants and Ethnologists (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 9.

¹⁰Friedrich Katz, The Ancient American Civilizations (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 10.

¹¹Map showing the Bering Strait where the first migrations to America likely occurred. Justin Winsor (ed.), Narrative and Critical History of America (New York: AMS Press, 1967), I, p. 77.

¹²Katz, Ancient American Civilizations, p. 11.

¹³Geoffrey Ashe, et al., The Quest For America (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1971), p. 5.

- ¹⁴ Edward Fontaine, How the World Was Peopled (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1891), pp. 148-49.
- ¹⁵ Clark Wissler, "The Origin of the American Indian," Natural History, LIII (1944), p. 313.
- ¹⁶ Ashe, Quest For America, p. 5.
- ¹⁷ MacGowan, Early Man, 0. 20.
- ¹⁸ Charles M. Boland, They All Discovered America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.
- ²⁰ MacGowan, Early Man, p. 211.
- ²¹ Boland, They All Discovered America, pp. 11-2, 14.
- ²² Ibid., p. 14.
- ²³ Ibid., pp. 15-6.
- ²⁴ Alex D. Krieger, "Early Man in the New World," Prehistoric Man in the New World, eds. Jesse D. Jennings and Edward Norbeck (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 46.
- ²⁵ Boland, They All Discovered America, p. 16.
- ²⁶ Krieger, Prehistoric Man, p. 45.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ M. L. Hopkins and Robert Butler, "Remarks on a Notched Fossil Bison Ischium," Tebiwa: Journal of Idaho State College Museum, IV, No. 2 (1961), pp. 10-18.
- ³⁰ Jean Francois Albert du Pouget, Marquis de Nadaillac, Pre-Historic America, trans. N. D'Anvers, ed. W. H. Dall (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), p. 523-24.
- ³¹ Fontaine, How the World Was Peopled, p. 13.
- ³² MacGowan, Early Man, p. 2.

³³Fontaine, How the World Was Peopled, p. 155.

³⁴Ashe, Quest For America, p. 5.

³⁵Nadaillac, Pre-Historic America, pp. 522-24.

CHAPTER III

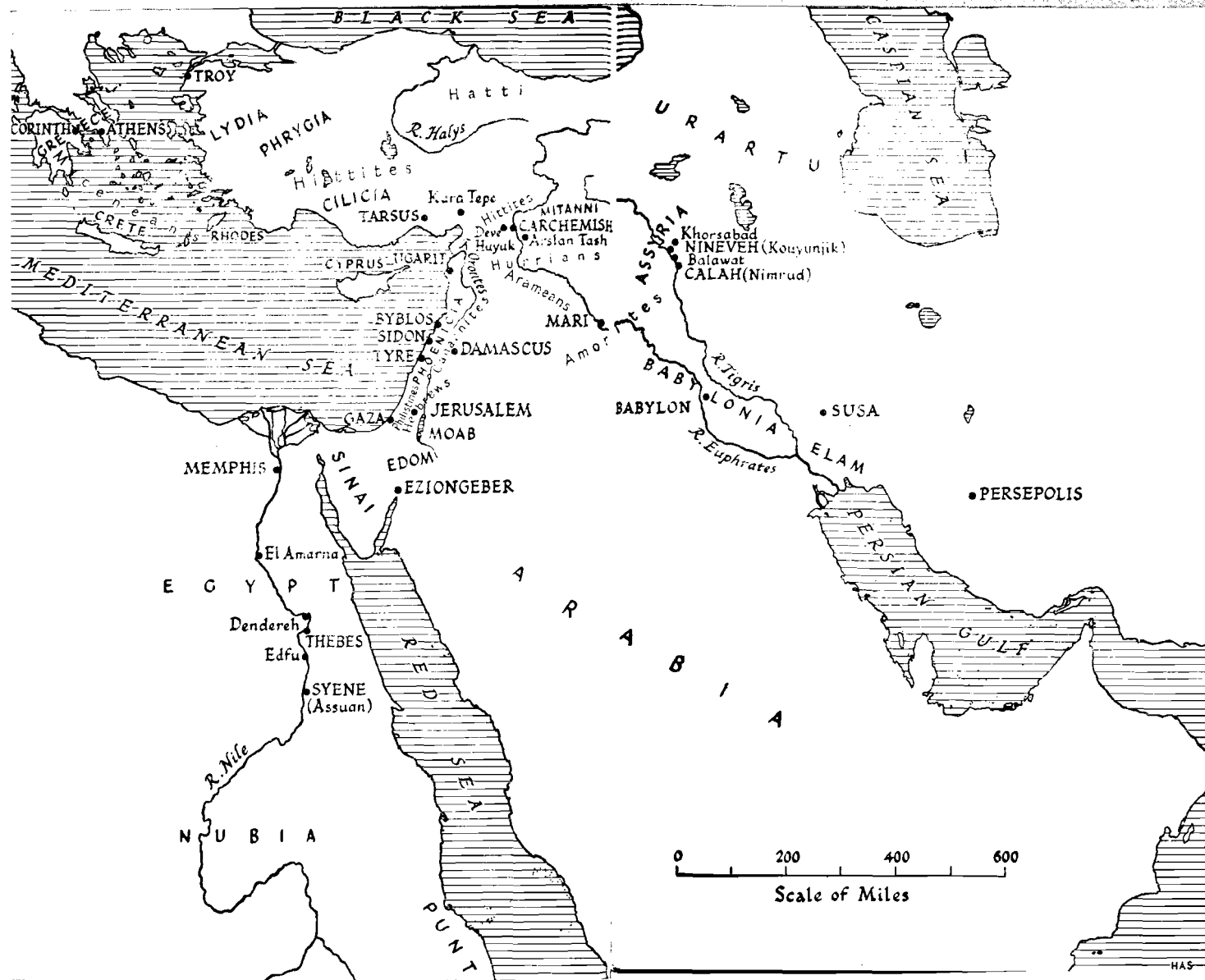
THE PHOENICIAN DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

The Phoenicians, from about 1200 B.C. to the razing of Carthage in 146 B.C., were the dominant power in the Mediterranean area, making daring voyages and showing sheer genius in trade and diplomacy. Then they fell, submerged by more militant empires. A map of this area is provided on the following page.¹

During major crossings of large bodies of water, the Phoenicians steered by the sun and the stars, and, with favorable winds, might make four to six knots and cover more than one hundred miles in a twenty-four hour period.²

When considering the Phoenician theory of the discovery of America, one encounters great difficulty since virtually no histories or literature of the Phoenicians survive. James B. Pritchard, Biblical scholar from the University of Pennsylvania Museum, points out that "what is known of them comes from others, chiefly their enemies. You can see what's left of some Phoenician cities, and you can go where they



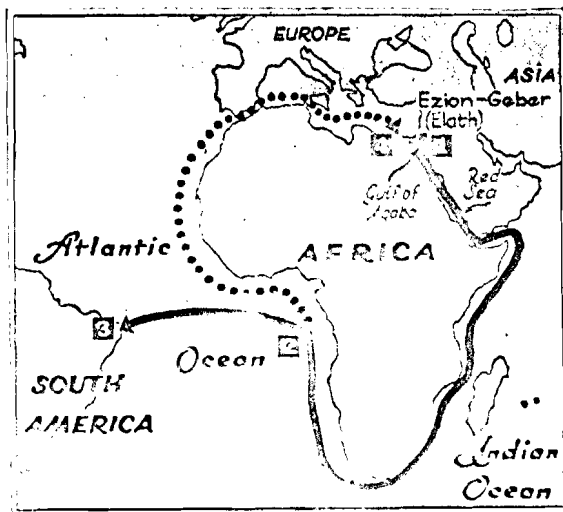
sailed. But don't look for written records."³

Information on the Phoenicians is so immense and widely scattered in many languages that it might take a lifetime to digest it all. A fairly comprehensive picture of the Phoenicians was obtained from the study of available information.

An early mention of a Carthaginian (Phoenician) expedition across the Atlantic is found in a book written between the 2nd century and 6th century A.D., and falsely attributed to Aristotle. Section 84 of On Marvelous Things Heard tells of an island in the sea outside the Pillars of Hercules having wood of all kinds, mountains, navigable rivers, and various kinds of fruits that was many days' sailing distance away.⁴

The story was first told in the 1st century B.C. by Diodorus of Sicily, who said the discovery was made by chance. The Phoenicians, he related, had left the port of Ezion-geber at the Gulf of Aqaba in ten ships. One of these ships ran into a furious storm off the coast of western Africa and was blown out into the ocean, and ". . . after they had lain under this violent tempest for many days, they at length arrived at this island, and so they were the first that discovered it."⁵ The map following shows where that one ship, shown with the heavy line, may have gone off course

and reached South America, while the others, shown by the dotted line, reached Egypt.⁶



The idea of such an Atlantic crossing is considered probable by several writers, including Frederick Pohl, who said that ". . . if the Carthaginians crossed the ocean it must have been westward from Africa, as it was only there that the prevailing winds and currents would have made a westward crossing probable."⁷

The idea that the eventual area of discovery was Brazil, is supported by Samuel Matthews, a contributor to National Geographic, who said that "neither the Canaries nor Madeira have any navigable rivers. The Azores lie too far north. The first lands west of Africa with such mountains and rivers are South America and the islands of the Antilles."⁸ Matthews went on to point out that:

The Mayas and their shadowy forbears, the Olmees, wrote in hieroglyphic symbols still being deciphered; reckoned by bar-and-dot number systems, kept a calendar, predicted motion of the stars. They built flat-topped pyramids, virtually identical to Mesopotamian ziggurats. Their carvings and figurines include aristocratic Mediterranean-looking priests or kings, with high-bridged noses, full beards, conical helmets, and pointed, upturned shoes, remarkably akin to Phoenician figures on Assyrian bas-reliefs.⁹

Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

The story of the Phoenician discovery remained basically unchanged down through the centuries, being retold again and again. Then, in 1872, the first in a series of evidences discovered to corroborate the theory made headlines around the world. In Parahyba, Brazil, a slave belonging to plantation owner Joaquim Alves de Costa found an inscribed stone tablet. The owner's son, an architect, copied the inscription and sent it to the Academy of Sciences in Rio de Janeiro for translation.¹⁰

Translations in many languages were made, but the most widely studied version of the inscription was a very garbled transcription published in Algeria in 1899. The garbled nature of the transcription and crudities of lettering and word usage, considered uncharacteristic of the Phoenicians, led scholars to dismiss the tablet as a fraud.¹¹ In fact, further investigation failed to locate either the stone tablet or Senhor de Costa, and the whole thing was dropped

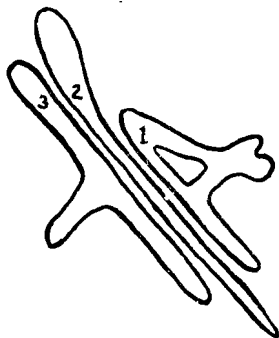
as a hoax.¹²

More possible corroborating evidence was discovered many years later, in 1941, by Philip Beistline, a school teacher in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Beistline, an ardent collector of Indian artifacts, found a small limestone about four inches long marked on two sides with what looked like a "cuneiform" inscription. Since this bore no resemblance to anything known to be of Indian origin, it excited the curiosity of one of Beistline's neighbors, William W. Strong, a physicist with a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. Strong immediately visited the site of Beistline's find, which was on the Hoy Farm near Conodoguinet Creek, and, on this first search, discovered many ironstones marked with grooves apparently in the form of alphabetic letters.¹³ A map showing the location of these ironstones is found below.¹⁴

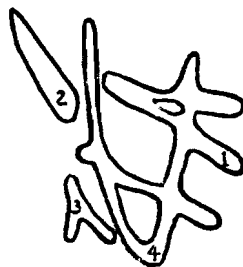


At first, Strong supposed the "inscriptions" to be Greek. Later, after finding some letters unlike anything in

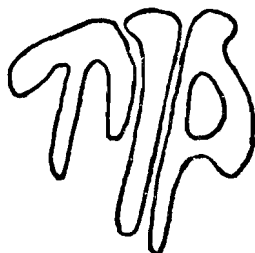
the Greek alphabet, he examined ancient alphabets to see whether they could be Etruscan, or Cyprian, or Hebrew. This study finally convinced him they were North Phoenician, or what he called "Canaanite."¹⁵ The illustration below shows these "inscriptions" and Strong's translations of them.¹⁶



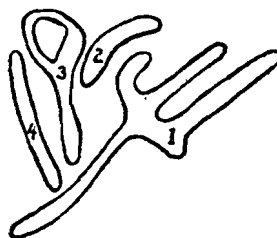
Aleph Resh Kaph
ARK—Eryx
(a city in Sicily)



Aleph Resh 'ayin Daleth
Arad—Aradus
(City in Asia Minor)



Q'oph Resh Tau
Carthage



Shin Resh Daleth Nun
S R D N
Sardinia



Tau Nun Nun Tau Nun'ayin Zayin
(reading right to left)
 Zoan Tanit
(a Carthaginian goddess)

Author Frederick J. Pohl, when asking Strong on what date he had discovered the first of these "inscriptions," received a most surprising answer:

He surprised me by being unable to remember the day or the month and he was uncertain even as to the year. When I asked whether he had felt elated at the moment of seeing that first "inscription," he replied that he had been skeptical, even questioning whether the marks were alphabetic, until he had found fifteen or more recurrent examples of 21 of the 22 letters of the North Phoenician alphabet. The one letter that was missing was "Beth," but finally he discovered markings which included Beth on a stone in a path to a farm kitchen. Without hesitation and with glowing enthusiasm, Dr. Strong gave the precise date of this discovery, August 31, 1942.¹⁷

A chart showing the variations in the alphabetic forms found in the "inscriptions" is found on the page following.¹⁸

Strong eventually found over four hundred ironstones bearing markings in alphabetic forms in York and Cumberland Counties of Pennsylvania, in regions close to creeks that flow into the Susquehanna River.

Frederick Pohl cited six theories of origin for the ironstones in Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus: 1) the grooves were the result of glacial action; 2) accidental gouging by farmers' plows or harrows; 3) the grooves were the result of the Indians living in the Susquehanna region; 4) the grooves were carved by members of the Lost Tribes of Israel; 5) the early Pennsylvanian Germans made the grooves; and 6) a hoaxer carved the grooves.¹⁹

However, Pohl quickly discounted all of these theories: 1) the ironstones existed south of the southern limits of glaciation, and a glacier does not mark a rock in eight or ten

Aleph	א א א א א א א א א א א א א א א א
Beth	ב ב ב ב ב ב ב ב
Gimel	ג ג ג ג ג ג ג ג
Daleth	ד ד ד ד ד ד ד ד
He	ה ה ה ה ה ה ה ה
Vau	ו ו ו ו ו ו ו ו
Zayin	ז ז ז ז ז ז ז ז
Cheth	ח ח ח ח ח ח ח ח
Teth	ט ט ט ט ט ט ט ט
Yodh	י י י י י י י י
Kaph	כ כ כ כ כ כ כ כ
Lamed	ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל
Mem	מ מ מ מ מ מ מ מ
Nun	נ נ נ נ נ נ נ נ
Samekh	ס ס ס ס ס ס ס ס
ayin	ע ע ע ע ע ע ע ע
Pe	פ פ פ פ פ פ פ פ
Tsade	צ צ צ צ צ צ צ צ
Q'oph	ק ק ק ק ק ק ק ק
Resh	ר ר ר ר ר ר ר ר
Shin	ש ש ש ש ש ש ש ש
Tau	ת ת ת ת ת ת ת ת

different directions, nor does it leave short curves as in the Phoenician letters Teth and Q'oph; 2) iron and steel of plows are not hard enough to abrade or to do more than scratch ironstone, which has a hardness of six or seven, and does not leave complex letters like Aleph and Shin; 3) no pre-Columbian Indians were ever known to have had knowledge of the Semitic alphabet or have the technical means of abrading rock of the hardness of Triassic diabase; 4) few today are willing to believe the Lost Tribes of Israel were living in North America several centuries before Christ, and that all those who knew the alphabet were later exterminated by disease or war; 5) the early Pennsylvanian Germans used the modern alphabet, and had pen, ink, and paper, and did not need to resort to abrasion on ironstones; and 6) a hoaxer would have had to work strenuously all day and every day for several years to have made all the abrasions, and would inevitably have become a legend in the region.²⁰

Pohl therefore believed there were but two alternatives to the origin: Strong's theory, or recognition that the grooves were the work of nature. However, Pohl stated:

There can be no suspicion of any attempts by Dr. Strong to deceive the public. The existence of the "inscription" grooves before Dr. Strong was born has been attested to in an affidavit I procured from a man who as a boy in 1880 lived on a farm where he and his father before him had noticed them. But we cannot overlook the possibility of self-deception [italics in the original] on Dr. Strong's part; perhaps it was merely a will-to-believe that

persuaded him that he was finding man-made alphabetic inscriptions.²¹

A point apparently against Strong's theory is that if the grooves are alphabetic, it is strange that the Phoenicians left inscriptions only on ironstone and not on any of the more prevalent limestones. Another telling point is that Phoenician inscriptions in Africa, or in Carthage, are linear, yet less than a half-dozen of Strong's four hundred finds can be called linear.²²

Pohl tried to hire a geologist to study the "inscriptions" and publicly state his opinion as to whether man or nature made them. Not one geologist would so risk his reputation.²³ Scholars who looked at the ironstones were divided on their opinions as to the origin of the "inscriptions," and Pohl concluded that the truth may never be known, but "if the 'inscription' grooves are the work of nature, they would seem to be among nature's most marvelous performances, quite as remarkable as anything ever imputed to the ancient gods."²⁴

Controversy over the ironstones and the Phoenician theory seems to have died down after the aforementioned events, until another new dimension was added to the theory in 1968 with the discovery of an old scrapbook. Jules Piccus, of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, had purchased an old scrapbook one day in Providence, Rhode Island, while browsing through a benefit sale for a woman's college. The scrapbook

apparently had belonged to Wilberforce Eames, head of the New York Public Library during the late 19th Century, and in it was a letter dated January 31, 1874, sent to Eames by Ladislau Netto. Netto, head of the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, had made the original translation of the inscription found on the 1872 stone tablet found in Brazil. Enclosed with the letter was a transcription of the tablet's inscription as well as translations into Hebrew and French.²⁵

Soon after the discovery of the old scrapbook, Cyrus H. Gordon of Brandeis University revived the theory concerning the 1872 tablet. Gordon re-assessed the inscription on the tablet and made an English translation of it, which is reproduced below along with the original inscription.²⁶

יְשִׁיבָנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִן הַיָּם
 מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם
 אֲנִי וְיָמֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם
 מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם
 אֲנִי וְיָמֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם
 מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם מִן הַיָּם

We are Sons of Canaan from Sidon, the city of the king. Commerce has east us on this distant shore, a land of mountains. We set [sacrificed] a youth for the exalted gods and goddesses in the 19th year of Hiram, our mighty king. We embarked from Ezion-Geber into the Red Sea and voyaged with 10 ships. We were at sea together for two years around the land belonging to Ham [Africa] but were separated by a storm [lit., "from the hand of Baal"] and we were no longer with our companions. So we have come here, 12 men and 3 women, on a new shore which I, the Admiral, control. But auspiciously may the exalted gods and goddesses favor us!

Gordon contended that the inscription confirmed an account by the great Greek historian, Herodotus, who, around 450 B.C., told of the Phoenicians circumnavigating the African continent in circa 600 B.C., and the fact that the inscription makes use of Phoenician terminology not known to archaeologists at the time of its discovery rules out its being a forgery.²⁷

Gordon's statements led to a voluminous ridiculing of his beliefs. Significant comments were those made by Luis Castro Farias and Frank Cross. Farias, an anthropologist at the Brazilian National Museum, ridiculed the stone tablet, pointing out that Ladislau Netto, the original translator, later concluded that it was a fake. Farias concluded that "No professional researcher in Brazil takes the theory seriously. It must be the idea of some unemployed amateur."²⁸

Cross, Professor of Hebrew and other oriental languages at Harvard, said flatly he still believed the inscription to be a forgery, as long suspected by specialists in Phoenician script. "The grammar is a mixture of Hebrew and Phoenician practices, indicating a forger whose knowledge of the ancient language was largely derived from Biblical studies."²⁹

The last article appearing on the Phoenician theory was featured in a 1970 issue of Saturday Review, which recounted the controversial statements made by Cyrus Gordon in 1968.³⁰

Critique on the Validity of the Theory

After considerable research on the Phoenician theory, it seems that two questions must be satisfactorily answered for one to conclude that this theory is valid. One of these questions is whether or not the Phoenicians had the type of ship capable of making an Atlantic crossing. Several authors have rendered opinions of this topic, including J. V. Luce, who stated "There can be no doubt that Phoenicians . . . had ships capable of making an Atlantic crossing,"³¹ and seaman-author Thor Heyerdahl, who built similar types of sailing vessels and sailed them across the Atlantic to prove the claim.³²

Yet, a second question must be considered as well, and that question is whether or not conclusive evidence exists to prove the Phoenicians did in fact make an Atlantic crossing and begin settlements on the American continent. Corroborating evidence already cited in this chapter, the 1872 stone tablet and the ironstones of Pennsylvania, have been shown to be less than conclusive.

This question has evoked numerous responses, the majority of which are unfavorable. J. V. Luce, who agreed that an Atlantic crossing was possible, also said ". . . there is no evidence that an Atlantic crossing was ever achieved, or even attempted, by any ancient captain."³³

Donald Harden, in The Phoenicians, believed that the Phoenicians probably knew of the Canary Islands, since they were close to the African coast, but never colonized them since the primitive Guanche culture of the islands was believed to have lasted untainted until the 15th Century A.D.³⁴ Harden further stated that the Phoenicians may have also reached the Azores at some stage, for eight Punic and one Cyrenaican coin of the third century B.C. were found as part of a hoard on Corvo Island in 1749, though they are now unfortunately lost.³⁵ Harden concluded that "Whatever emphasis we feel like placing on this single find it must at best imply no more than exploration, for if there were no Phoenician settlements in Madeira and the Canaries, such can hardly have existed as far west as the Azores."³⁶

Historians Max Cary and Eric Warmington have concluded that although contact between Europe and America has been inferred from similarities between American and Mediterranean place-names, from resemblances between ancient Mediterranean culture and the civilization of Mexico, and from reputed finds of Greek or Phoenician coins on American soil,

. . . the homonyms are conspicuously few, and were they more numerous they could still be explained as mere coincidences. The similarities of culture can safely be attributed to parallel development. The supposed ancient coins mostly fail to materialize when search is made for them; the few which have been traced are certified forgeries.³⁷

Lastly, John Baldwin, in Ancient America, felt that if the Phoenicians did found the civilizations of Mexico and Central America, as some suggest,

. . . it would be true also that they built in America as they never built any where else, that they established a language here radically unlike their own, and that they used a style of writing totally different from that which they carried into every other region occupied by their colonies.³⁸

Baldwin concluded that:

. . . therefore we can not reasonably suppose this American civilization was originated by people of the Phoenician race, whatever may be thought relative to the supposed ancient communication between the two continents and its probable influence on civilized communities already existing here.³⁹

After consideration of all of the aforementioned statements and of the material extensively researched in this study, while Atlantic crossings by the Phoenicians can be considered possible, the evidence clearly indicates that none were likely made nor colonies probably established. Therefore, one can safely conclude that the Phoenician theory on the discovery of America is not valid.

NOTES

¹Map showing the ancient Near East in the late second and early first millennium B.C. Donald B. Harden, The Phoenicians (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1962), pp. 46-7.

²Samuel W. Matthews, "The Phoenicians: Sea Lords of Antiquity," National Geographic, CXLVI, No. 2 (August, 1974), p. 168.

³Ibid., p. 150.

⁴Frederick J. Pohl, Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 20.

⁵Ibid., p. 21, citing The Historical Library, Book V, Chapter II, trans. G. Booth, (London: 1700), [].

⁶Map showing the possible course of a Phoenician ship blown off course near western Africa that purportedly discovered America. Walter Sullivan, "Phoenicia Linked to America," The New York Times, May 16, 1968, p. 49.

⁷Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 22.

⁸Matthews, National Geographic, CXLVI, No. 2, p. 185.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰"Before Columbus or the Vikings," Time, XCI, No. 21 (May 24, 1968), p. 62.

¹¹Sullivan, The New York Times, p. 49.

¹²Samuel Eliot Morison, The European Discovery of America: Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 12.

¹³Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 23.

¹⁴Map showing location of the Pennsylvania ironstones, ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁶Illustration showing the Phoenician "inscriptions" on the ironstones and Dr. Strong's translations, ibid., p. 29.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁸Chart showing variations in the alphabetic forms in the ironstone "inscriptions," ibid., p. 28.

¹⁹Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 26.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 26-7.

²¹Ibid., p. 27.

²²Ibid., p. 31.

²³Ibid., p. 31-2.

²⁴Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵Sullivan, The New York Times, p. 49.

²⁶Illustration of stone tablet's inscription and Cyrus Gordon's translation, ibid.

²⁷Francis R. B. Godolphin (ed.), The Greek Historians, trans. George Rawlinson (New York: Random House, 1942), I, p. 241. Herodotus did not believe this tale.

²⁸"Brazilian Ridicules 'Phoenician' Stone," The New York Times, May 18, 1968, p. 4.

²⁹Walter Sullivan, "On Those Who Came to America," The New York Times, May 19, 1968, Sec. 4, p. 14.

³⁰John Lear, "Ancient Landings in America," Saturday Review, LIII, No. 29 (July 18, 1970), p. 34.

³¹Geoffrey Ashe, et al., The Quest For America (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1971), p. 94.

³²Lear, "Ancient Landings in America," p. 34.

³³Ashe, Quest For America, p. 94.

³⁴Donald B. Harden, "The Phoenicians on the West Coast of Africa," Antiquity, XXII (1948), p. 178.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

³⁶ Harden, The Phoenicians, p. 179.

³⁷ Max Cary and Eric H. Warmington (eds.), The Ancient Explorers (Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1963), p. 71.

³⁸ John D. Baldwin, Ancient America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1871), p. 173.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHINESE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

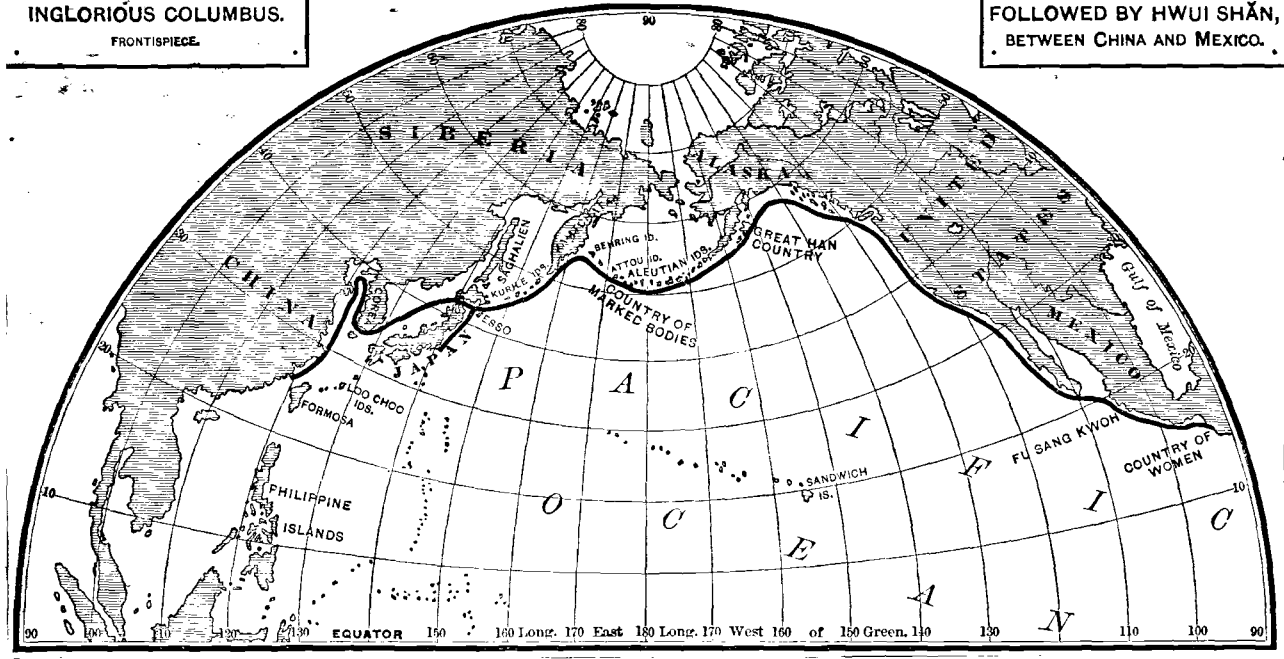
The theory of the Chinese discovery of America, like the other theories discussed in this thesis, has been one of controversy. Material concerning the theory basically was written in the 18th and 19th centuries, after which time the controversy seems to have died a natural death for lack of knowledge. Nevertheless, the theory needs to be carefully examined, since many scholars and authors still contend that there may be some truth in it.

The theory centers around the purported journey of a Chinese Buddhist monk named Hwei-shin (Hwui-shan) to America in the late 5th century A.D. A map showing the supposed route of Hwei-shin is on the following page.¹

The narrative of Hwei-shin was regularly entered on the Annals of the Chinese Empire beginning in A.D. 499, whence it passed to historians, poets and writers of romances, by whom it was so confused with absurd inventions, according to Charles Leland, that it was not taken seriously for many years.²

AN
INGLORIOUS COLUMBUS.
FRONTISPIECE.

MAP OF THE ROUTE
FOLLOWED BY HWUI SHĀN,
BETWEEN CHINA AND MEXICO.



It was in 1761 that French Sinologist, Joseph de Guignes, in the article "Investigation of the Navigations of the Chinese to the Coast of America, and as to Some Tribes at the Eastern Extremity of Asia," retold the story of Hwei-shin, after extensive research of the works of early Chinese historians.³ One of these historians, Li yan tcheou, according to de Guignes, first told the story in which Hwei-shin reached an area he called Fu-sang, which lay 20,000 "li" (or Chinese miles) from China, with one Chinese "li" equaling approximately 1/3 of a statute mile.⁴ De Guignes, after careful research of material he considered quite scanty and doubtful, deduced that Fu-sang appeared to be located in western America, and, in all probability, Mexico, although he could not absolutely prove Hwei-shin reached America.⁵

It appears, however, that de Guignes must have given an earlier account, for a letter dated at Peking on August 28, 1752, written by Pere Gaubil to a M. de l'Isle, mentions de Guignes's discovery of the Chinese account of Hwei-shin. Gaubil, in the letter, stated that he did not believe in the tale.⁶ A similar view was given nearly sixty years later by the great Alexander von Humboldt, who concluded that he did not believe the Chinese reached the western coast of America at the time de Guignes stated.⁷

In 1831, Julius Heinrich von Klaproth, a distinguished scholar and Prussian Sinologist, tried to refute the thesis of de Guignes in "Researches regarding the Country of Fu-sang, mentioned in Chinese Books, and erroneously to be a Part of America."⁸ In this article, Klaproth asserted that the Chinese did not know east from south and they did not know how to count, thereby not really knowing how far they had traveled. He was fully convinced that the story was a shrewd, unscrupulous trick, pointing out that nothing is said of a voyage to Fu-sang in the original Chinese narrative that de Guignes had before his eyes.⁹

Klaproth, however, did admit that Fu-sang existed, but stated that it was not located in America, but somewhere along the southeast coast of Japan, although he could see striking analogies, as he thought, between the Mexican myths and customs and those of the Chinese.¹⁰

Klaproth's opinion evoked great criticism, including that from Charles Leland, an author who would later write a book on the theory. Leland was quite vehement in his attacks, stating that "the refutation of Klaproth now appears to be worthless; Klaproth produces nothing new, and attacks Deguignes entirely 'out of himself.'"¹¹ Leland, after consideration of Klaproth's theory that Fu-sang was in Japan,

remarked that

. . . the narrative declares that Buddhism was introduced into Fusang in A.D. 458, but it did not find its way into Japan, officially at least, until 552. How then could Fusang, admitting that it existed, have been a part of Japan?¹²

Still, with the reputation of Klaproth, his discrediting of the theory carried a great deal of weight in the scholarly world, and most would never even consider the theory as valid again, if they ever had before.

Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

After the devastation by Klaproth, ten years passed before a new article appeared on the Chinese theory. This article was by Karl Friedrich Neumann, Professor of Oriental Languages and History at the University of Munich and was titled "Eastern Asia and Western America, according to Chinese Authorities of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Centuries." In the article, Neumann published the original narrative of Hwei-shin from the Annals, and added to it his original comments elucidating its statements and advancing somewhat beyond de Guignes.¹³ The article was later translated into English by Charles Leland, under the supervision of Neumann, and appeared in The Knickerbocker in 1850.¹⁴

In 1844, two pamphlets were published by Chevalier de Paravey, in which he tried to refute Klaproth's thesis that

Fu-sang was located in Japan. Paravey's assertion was that Fu-sang was in America as de Guignes believed originally.¹⁵ After Paravey's pamphlets, little concerning the Chinese theory was written until 1870, although scholar Gustave d'Eichthal tried to refute Klaproth in 1865¹⁶ and writer Theos. Simson expressed his belief in 1869 that Fu-sang was in Japan.¹⁷

It was in October of 1870 that Dr. Emil Bretschneider published an article in the Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal, in which he contended that the whole story of Hwei-shin was a fabrication of a "lying priest" and a "consummate humbug."¹⁸ Bretschneider went on to say that the credibility of Hwei-shin was utterly destroyed, firstly by the stories embroidered by Chinese poets on his narratives hundreds of years after his death, and, secondly, that Hwei-shin admitted in his narrative that he had never visited the "Kingdom of Women" located, according to his estimation, 1000 "li" east of Fu-sang. If Hwei-shin never visited such a place, contended Bretschneider, how did he ever describe the place in such detail?¹⁹ Bretschneider reasoned that this was possible by Hwei-shin's reading of the Japanese Annals, which tell of such a place existing in southern Japan.²⁰

While controversy over the views of Dr. Bretschneider gathered some interest, a most conspicuous study for the

English reader appeared in 1875 written by Charles G. Leland. His book, Fusang, or the Discovery of America by Chinese Buddhist Priests in the Fifth Century, reprinted in 1973, discusses each of the viewpoints of de Guignes down to Bretschneider, and he offers comment of his own which attempted to justify his belief that Hwei-shin actually discovered America.

After his initial discussion, Leland mentioned a letter he had received from a friend of his in London, a Colonel Barclay Kennon, dated April 3, 1874. In this letter, Kennon, who was a prominent officer in the United States Coast Survey, told Leland that after surveying and mapping the entire North Pacific coasts of America and Asia, he was of the opinion that Hwei-shin's voyage was easily practicable and might be effected in an open boat.²¹

On this premise, Leland then began to construct the basis for his belief. During the journey of Hwei-shin, related Leland, he found and described such objects as the maguey plant (green cactus), which he called "Fusang," since it was similar to a Chinese plant of the same name. Hwei-shin also noted the absence of iron, the marriage customs of the natives (which supposedly did not conform to the Chinese customs), and the fact that copper, gold and silver were not prized by the natives and were not used as money. These

things, asserted Leland, are peculiar to Mexico (which he believed to be Fu-sang), but were not known to China in the late 5th Century.²² However, Leland had to concede that "all that seems fabulous in his story, he . . . relates from hearsay."²³

Leland also pointed out that in his narrative, Hoen-shin mentions that five beggar-monks (whom he purportedly met there) were already in Fu-sang in A.D. 485 and that they had brought with them images of Buddha. Yet, Leland had to admit that "images resembling the ordinary Buddha . . . found in Mexico and Central America . . . cannot be proved to be identical with it."²⁴

Finally, Leland admitted that only circumstantial evidence existed to back up his claim; the extant narratives attested only to the zeal with which Chinese monks went forth to remote regions, and it would have been easy for Hoen-shin and his predecessors to "island hop" their way to America along the Aleutian Island Chain. He concluded that "the evidence offered in favor of the discovery . . . is very limited, but it has every characteristic of . . . authentic history."²⁵

Leland's book was widely commented on by those who read it, but a more detailed and complete volume on the subject was yet to come. The volume was Edward P. Vining's

An Inglorious Columbus, which appeared in 1885 and was a repository of all the essential contributions to the question from de Guignes on down. In the book, Vining also examined an eighteen volume work supposedly written in 2250 B.C. by Emperor Yu of China entitled "Shan Hai King or the Chinese Classic of Mountains and Seas."²⁶ This work gives a fabulous description of the world based on purported voyages and travels by Chinese explorers, and Vining compared its descriptions with those of Fu-sang in Hwei-shin's narrative, and arrived at the conclusion that Fu-sang was Mexico.²⁷

Lastly, in Chapter 37, Vining summarized all of his "proofs," to include 1) the journey could easily have been made; 2) the marriage customs of Mexico were unlike those of any other Indian tribe in North America; 3) there were coincidences between Asiatic and American civilizations; 4) there were strong similarities between Chinese and Mexican architecture, religious structures and customs; and 5) Hwei-shin's story supposedly paralleled accounts of the country by other authors.²⁸

Vining's book, as massive and well-done as it was, evoked little comment. Apparently, as available information seems to show, Klaproth's devastating discrediting of the theory in 1831 had led most scholars to reject the theory entirely. Few would even pursue new information on the

subject. As a result, interest in the theory died away and nothing new on the subject appeared until 1952, when author Henriette Mertz published Pale Ink (revised in 1972).

In this book, Mertz reviewed all previous theories and opinions on the subject, as well as examining Hwei-shin's narrative and Yu's Shan Hai King, and concluded that Hwei-shin really landed north of Los Angeles, California.²⁹ To "prove" her point, Mertz cited the excavations made by Louis Leakey in 1970 seventy miles from this location, which carbon dated at 50,000 years, and then excavated another area 350 miles away (where she believed the "Kingdom of Women" to be located) which Carbon-14 dated at 4500 years. To Mertz, this in itself confirmed the fact that humans with some kind of culture were living in the territory as early as 2500 B.C.³⁰ Nothing of Chinese origin, however, was discovered in either place to prove her claim that Hwei-shin landed at or near that area.

Mertz had to admit that the history of the two writings dealt with in her research (Hwei-shin's narrative and Yu's book) had been fraught with doubt and dissension, since both writings were fragmentary, no two translations from Chinese into English agreed in phraseology, and some early editions of the early record did not agree with each other.³¹ In fact, as she pointed out, the narrative of Hwei-shin had

undergone several editings, and the Shan Hai King, which had survived the burning of the books in 231 B.C., underwent two condensations and numerous editings.³² Still, in light of this, Mertz contended that these records "show" that 1) the Fusang plant was corn; 2) Fusang existed in the southwest United States and Mexico; 3) the source of the Zapotec, Maya and Aztec calendars was oriental; 4) the source of Mexican writing was oriental; and 5) the Chinese were in America as early as 2200 B.C. and came periodically up to A.D. 500.³³

The last article to appear concerning the Chinese discovery is found in the pages of The New York Times in 1961. The article, written in China, stated that "evidence" has "proved" that the Chinese reached America one thousand years before Columbus.³⁴ Unfortunately, none of this evidence is given in the article, nor is there any indication how the discovery was proved.

Critique of Validity of the Theory

Certain observations need to be made before the validity of the Chinese theory can be determined. First, available evidence seems to confirm that a journey by Hwei-shin was possible. As Charles Boland has stated:

Acceptance of a direct voyage across the Pacific by Hwei-shin is not difficult. Assuming that he had a big

ship, and a compass, and knowing that the prevailing wind is the Pacific is northwesterly, he was risking little.³⁵

Secondly, one conflicting point seems to occur over what the plant "Fu-sang" really was. As previously shown in this chapter, Charles Leland has identified it with the maguey plant or green cactus, Henriette Mertz has identified it with corn, while others have made no such identification, merely stating that it resembled a plant found in China.

Thirdly, and most importantly, it seems no hard evidences exist that conclusively prove discovery of America by the Chinese. Authors merely give theories and interpretations which link descriptions in the narrative of Hwei-shin to items found in America (chiefly Mexico). Even Charles Leland had to admit:

I am far from claiming that it has been absolutely proved that Hwei-shin was in Mexico, or that he was preceded thither by "five beggar-monks from the Kingdom of Kipin,"³⁶

Authors William C. Bryant and Sidney H. Gay stated that the story is too indefinite until supported by further evidence.³⁷

Charles Boland stated that this evidence was destroyed when three fanatic Spanish bishops, the Bishop de Landas, the Bishop of Meridas, and the Don Juan de Zummarragas, were blindly led by the belief that the art and literature of the Indians was inspired by the devil, and burned all of the Aztec and Mayan books. In Boland's opinion, this act may

have stilled forever the hope of gaining a thorough knowledge of the history of Middle America and South America.³⁸

Yet, after taking all of these things into consideration, until hard evidences have been brought forth to conclusively prove the claim, one can feel safe in concluding that the theory of the Chinese discovery of America before Columbus is not valid.

NOTES

¹Map showing the purported route of Hwei-shin to America. Edward P. Vining, An Inglorious Columbus: or, Evidence That Hwei-Shan And a Party of Buddhist Monks From Afghanistan Discovered America in the Fifth Century (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1885), frontispiece.

²Charles G. Leland, Fusang, or the Discovery of America by Chinese Buddhist Priests in the Fifth Century, reprint of 1875 edition (London: Curzon Press, 1973), pp. v-vi.

³Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 13, citing Literary Memoirs extracted from the Registers of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, XXVIII (Paris, 1761).

⁴Hubert H. Bancroft, The Native Races of the Pacific States (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1876), V, p. 33.

⁵Leland, Fusang, p. v.

⁶Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, pp. 13-14.

⁷Alexander von Humboldt, Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain, trans. John Black, reprint of 1811 edition (New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 70.

⁸Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 14, citing Vol. LI of the New Annals of Voyages (Paris, 1831). This publication contains Klaproth's article. Vining's An Inglorious Columbus and Leland's Fusang was used to cite Klaproth since both authors translate Klaproth's article from the original French into English and the original document was unobtainable for research.

⁹Leland, Fusang, p. 139.

¹⁰Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 46.

¹¹Leland, Fusang, pp. 138-39.

¹²Ibid., p. 143.

¹³Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 15, citing Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erkunde, New Series, XVI (1841), p. 305.

¹⁴Charles Leland, "California and Mexico in the fifth century," The Knickerbocker, XXXVI, (1850), p. 301.

¹⁵Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 15.

¹⁶Leland, Fusang, pp. 156-57.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 163, citing Notes and Queries for China and Japan, No. 5 (May, 1869).

¹⁸Emil Bretschneider, "Fusang; or, Who Discovered America?," The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal, Vol. III, No. 5 (Foochow: October, 1870), p. 17.

¹⁹Leland, Fusang, pp. 177-78.

²⁰Ibid., p. 178.

²¹Ibid., p. vii.

²²Ibid., p. viii.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 119-20.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 63-86.

²⁶Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, p. 669.

²⁷Justin Winsor (ed.), Narrative and Critical History of America (New York: AMS Press, 1967), I, p. 48, citing Humboldt's Examin. Crit., pp. 80-81.

²⁸Vining, An Inglorious Columbus, pp. 684-710.

²⁹Henriette Mertz, Pale Ink: Two Ancient Records of Chinese Exploration in America (Chicago: The Swallow Press Incorporated, 1972), p. 30.

³⁰Ibid., p. 31-2.

³¹Ibid., p. 157.

³²Mertz, Pale Ink: Two Ancient Records of Chinese Exploration, p. 157.

³³Ibid., pp. 158-59.

³⁴"Peiping Discovers Columbus Landed Long After Chinese," The New York Times, December 4, 1961), p. 39.

³⁵Charles M. Boland, They All Discovered America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961), p. 82.

³⁶Leland, Fusang, pp. vii-viii.

³⁷William Cullen Bryant and Sidney Howard Gay, Scribner's Popular History of the United States (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), I, p. 87.

³⁸Boland, They All Discovered America, p. 87.

CHAPTER V

THE IRISH DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

From the fifth to the eighth centuries, the Celts were the most powerful force in the culture of western Europe. Many tales of daring Irish voyages upon the stormy western ocean were told. Included in these tales was one concerning the discovery of America by one St. Brendan.

Before examination of this theory and the evidences that support it, it is necessary to look at certain facts concerning Irish sea rovers. The Irish had coracles or curraghs, boats made of animal skins stretched over frames of slender flexible branches called withies. Though frail by modern standards, these boats were remarkably seaworthy.

The Irish became capable mariners, aware of every sign that birds and sky color could give as to weather changes and as to directions and location of land. Some were driven by necessity to take to the sea as fishermen and traders, while others, with an irresistible proselytizing urge, sailed to other lands as missionaries. This missionary zeal carried

Irish anchorites to such North Atlantic islands as the Orkneys, Shetlands, Faroes and Iceland.

When the Norsemen moved into these areas, there was religious conflict between the two groups. Although the Irish saw spiritual victory in the conversion of these "heathens" to Christianity, most of the monks chose to leave rather than live among the Norse. Some of these monks fled to Iceland, according to the Landnamabók or Icelandic Book of Settlement, which tells of the Irish in Iceland in 795, sixty-five years before the Norsemen arrived.¹

Yet, whether the Irish moved further west to America, as the Irish tales recount, is a subject that must be extensively examined before a conclusion can be reached.

The Irish theory, as previously stated, revolved around one man, St. Brendan, who was the patron saint of Kerry. Brendan, whose name is also found spelled "Brandan" and "Brenainn," was a real person who lived from about 484 until his death on May 16, 577, and is one of the most popular of the Irish saints. He is widely commemorated in other place names and in church dedications, but was genuinely famous for his sea faring (often being called "the Navigator"), as far as the Inner Hebrides, if no further.

The story of St. Brendan's ocean voyages, found in French, Dutch, German, English, Norse, Flemish, Provencal

and Italian, is termed by many authors as his legendary "life," since tales of his purported sea voyages were more unusual and appealing to the masses than his land pilgrimages, which gradually became completely overshadowed.²

The story of St. Brendan is affected by two factors peculiar to Ireland, both of which must be understood before any assessment of the theory can be attempted. One factor is the custom of sea-pilgrimage. Over a two or three hundred year period, many Irish monks besides St. Brendan actually made voyages, and as so often in legend-making, the most famous figure came to be credited with deeds not authentically his.³

The second factor is the influence of mythology. Tales spoke of those who, in their coracles, had gone west and found the lands spoken of by Plato and others.⁴ These yarns were most commonly referred to as "immrama."

Written allusions to the voyages of St. Brendan began to appear in the 9th century, and grew out of a lost process of oral development. As time passed, these writings became fairly plentiful, although there are just three basic texts, two of these being supplementary to the third, which is the single real document.

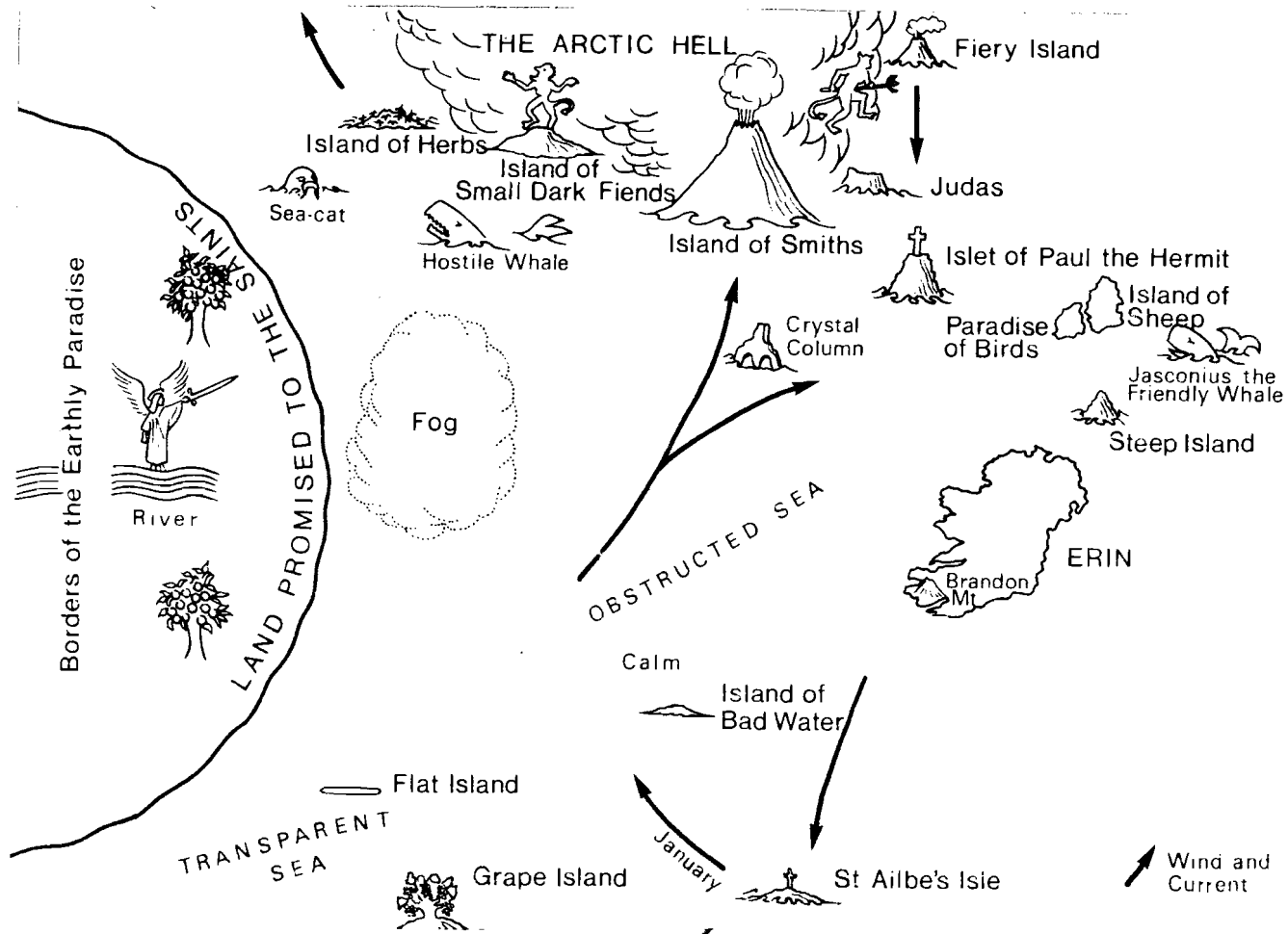
First comes a passage in the "life" of another saint, the Breton Machutus, i.e. Malo. This passage, thought to

have been composed between 866 and 872, relates how Malo met Brendan at a monastery in Wales and joined him in his search for the Isle of the Blest, called Yma.⁵ This testifies to a Brendan sea-saga being already familiar outside Ireland by the late 9th century.

Next is the narrative of the voyage given in the main official "life" of Brendan, which is found in the Book of Lismore and elsewhere, a good deal enlarged. The original was composed in the early 10th century and told of climbing the summit of Brandon Mountain and sighting land to the west, referred to as the "Promised Land," which he eventually reached.⁶ A map denoting these areas follows on the next page.

A gap in the text occurs here and no further particulars as to the size or nature of the land or how he got home are given. The narrative itself, according to Geoffrey Ashe, could not prove anything and would hardly suggest anything about a discovery of America, but it had an air of preserving memories and images which were more authentic than "immrama" fantasy.⁷

The third, and crucial text, is Navigatio Sancti Brendani or the "Voyage of St. Brendan." This was a Latin prose work written between 900 and 920 by an anonymous Irishman in Ireland, and deals with the voyage alone as a



story in its own right, not as part of a complete "life" of the saint. The author appears to be writing a sort of Irish Odyssey around a hero already established as a seafarer, and his biographical pretensions are almost nil.⁸

Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

The story cannot be traced beyond the 11th century, although the story was related again and again during the Middle Ages, when it was a great favorite. Several authors do recount the story quite adequately down to the 19th century, including William Caxton,⁹ Alexander von Humboldt¹⁰ and D'Avezac,¹¹ yet a great amount of scholarly writing on the subject is sorely lacking.

Geographers did involve themselves in the attempt to pinpoint the exact location of the great island of St. Brandan. At first, the island was placed in the neighborhood of Ireland, but in later times it was transferred to a more southerly latitude. Expeditions were formed down to the year 1759 to find the island, and it was located, among other places, in the Madeiras, west of the Canaries, and near the equator.¹²

In the 20th century, a discovery was made that seemed to confirm that the Irish did make it to America. The discovery was made by William B. Goodwin, an insurance executive from

Hartford, Connecticut, who had purchased some land in North Salem, New Hampshire. On this land, locally known as Pattee's Caves, were found some curious ruins which Goodwin set about to excavate and restore. After restoration was completed, Goodwin announced that he believed the buildings were really an Irish monastery established by sailor monks who sought refuge beyond the sea from Viking raiders. In addition, a slab of stone, called the "Sacrificial Stone," was found on the site, which had a narrow channel cut around its upper surface with an outlet at one end, obviously designed to catch and draw off some liquid.¹³

Goodwin's find generated a great deal of interest and comment, although the comments were generally unfavorable. Hugh Hencken, an Irish archaeologist, examined the site and observed that 1) some of the buildings exhibited two kinds of drill marks unknown in early Christian Ireland; 2) the "Sacrificial Stone" never could have been connected with Irish monks in the first place, and was actually one of the lye-stones commonly used in New England to wash out lye from woodashes; and 3) that part of the buildings were the work of Jonathan Pattee, the original owner, between 1826 and 1848. Therefore, Hencken concluded, the ruins must date from after the white settlement of New England in the early 17th Century, since none of the objects found by Goodwin appeared to be

older than 1790.¹⁴

In 1968, a new book by Carl Sauer was reviewed by Henry Raymont in the May 5th edition of The New York Times,¹⁵ a book which revealed new "evidences" of an Irish discovery of America. The evidence consisted of the remains of an iron-smelting industry in Newfoundland which Sauer linked to Celtic craftsmen. The Irish, according to Raymont's review, were purportedly driven to America by the Vikings and settled at Belle Isle, between Labrador and Newfoundland and along the St. Lawrence River, where they eventually merged into the culture of the Algonquin Indians. Reports by early French missionaries in Canada tell of witnessing an Algonquin ceremony resembling Passion Week, and Sauer traced this to the influence of the Irish monks.

Unfortunately for Sauer, none of the "evidences" he produced conclusively proved to be of Irish origin, yet the recurrent idea of the Irish being driven to America by the Vikings has figured into the most controversial aspect of the Irish theory. That aspect is the existence of "Hvitramanna," "Great Ireland," or the "White Man's Land."

The Landnamabók, as previously mentioned, tells of the Irish in Iceland, who were called "papae" or "papar," leaving the island because of the heathen Norsemen. Yet, where did these Irish Icelanders go? It seems safe to conclude that

some returned to Ireland and that some probably perished at sea in their frail coracles, yet there is reason to believe, according to Samuel Morison¹⁶ and Frederick Pohl¹⁷ that a few sailed west and may have reached the east coast of North America.

The evidence these two authors point to is found in the Icelandic sagas. The Landnamabók tells of an Icelander named Ari Marson who drifted over the ocean westward to "Hvitramanna Land" near Vinland, and, unable to escape, was baptized and held in great esteem by the natives.¹⁸

The Eyrbyggja Saga, written in 1250, adds more details, telling of one Bjorn, who, after having an affair with a lady in Iceland named Thurid (who bore him a son), and after nearly being killed by her brother, took a ship and disappeared to the west. Some years later, around 1025-30, a certain Gudleif Gunnlangson, was driven off course near Iceland and eventually came to anchor in an unknown harbor, where he was seized by a group of natives who spoke a language Gudleif thought to be Irish. While the natives were debating whether to kill or enslave Gudleif and his crew, a tall, old, white-haired man approached on horseback, spoke to Gudleif in Norse, and told him to leave quickly or be killed. Gudleif left, but he recognized the old man as Bjorn.¹⁹

Finally, a passage in the Saga of Eric the Red tells of

captives who described men clad in white, who carried poles with pieces of cloth attached, and yelled loudly. The Norse who heard them yell said to each other, "Sounds like an Irish ecclesiastical procession!"²⁰

Critique of Validity of the Theory

One problem in evaluating the Irish theory is the lack of documentary evidence. As Frederick Pohl has pointed out,²¹ practically all historical records in Ireland were destroyed during the centuries of warfare that ravaged that country. One feels constrained to say, therefore, that it would be unfair for a historian to cite the absence of written records in Ireland as an argument against Irish claims of pre-Columbian crossings of the Atlantic. Yet this does not mean that all of the Irish tales should be accepted at face value, as some of them have been shown to be obvious mystical and poetic weavings of a highly-active Celtic imagination.

After extensive research on the Irish theory, it seems that validity must rest on satisfactory answers to certain questions, the first of which revolves around Navigatio Sancti Brendani, which was orally transmitted until written down some three centuries after the death of Brendan. According to Geoffrey Ashe, any alleged proofs of knowledge of America must depend largely on an assessment of the

Navigatio as a whole.²² This document contains many records of natural phenomena so precise and individual as to suggest an origin in the experience, if not of Brendan and his crew of monks, then of other Irish wanderers.²³ This view basically agrees with that of Edward Payne, who said "the whole story of the Saint's adventures bears neither repetition nor criticism; but in the midst of much crude fiction we find occasional touches which have evidently been derived from the reports of genuine voyagers."²⁴

Ashe felt that such a story must be approached with caution as it was part of Brendan's legendary life composed more than three centuries after his death, and is not a literal record. The author, according to Ashe, had considerable story-telling skill, but was rehandling matter he did not fully understand. A case in point was where this author made a change in the type of Brendan's vessel from a coracle to a wooden boat. This was unlikely since there is no evidence that wooden ships were known to exist in 6th century Ireland. Ashe concluded, however, that, as a literal exploit, the voyage was incredible even apart from its assorted fairy-tale elements and the wooden ship.²⁵

Material that was researched for this chapter generally agrees with Ashe that the Irish did make some voyages. Evidence already presented has shown the Irish reached many

North Atlantic islands, including Iceland. Yet, a second question must be considered at this point: did the Irish successfully reach Greenland?

Opinion is divided on this point, although Ashe believed that it was possible and likely. He said that the Navigatio tells of a land west of the Faroes, where the voyagers encountered whales, pygmies and dwarfs as black as coal, and a sea-cat with enormous eyes, whiskers and tusks, details which suggested the west coast of Greenland on the Davis Straits. Ashe concluded that these and other geographical identifications described in the Navigatio are sufficiently numerous and consistent with the meteorology and sailing conditions of the North Atlantic to admit the historical possibility that Irish monks, fleeing from Iceland before the Vikings, took refuge in Greenland.²⁶

The Islendingabók seems to confirm this view when it states that in Greenland, in 982-985, the first Norse settlers in fact found "human habitations, both in the east and west of the country, also the remains of hide boats and implements of stone."²⁷ Gwen Jones believed these objects were of Eskimo origin,²⁸ but Carl Sauer agreed with Ashe that the objects were Irish.²⁹ Although opinion remains somewhat divided, the evidence seems to at least suggest the possibility of Irish settlement in Greenland.

This assumption leads up to the last and most important question: did the Irish reach America? Many opinions on this aspect have been rendered over the years and careful analysis of the more important ones seems vital to assess the validity of this theory.

Geoffrey Ashe declared that the evidence for Irish voyaging and settlement further west than Greenland was insubstantial. He stated that there are visual clues in Navigatio that perhaps point to the fogs of the Newfoundland Banks, to the southward drift of icebergs in the spring, to a coral sea, and the "Land of Promise," which Brendan was said to have explored for forty days. And the Icelandic sagas and chronicles do tell of "Hvitramanna" or "Great Ireland" to the west, where Norsemen in the 10th and 11th Centuries found or heard of Christians speaking a language thought to be Irish. Yet Ashe concluded that the geographical context of these reports associated them with Greenland as plausibly as with America.³⁰

Samuel Morison, after reviewing the tales of Ari Marson in the Landnamabók, of Bjorn and Gudleif in the Eyrbyggja Saga, and the passage in the Saga of Eric the Red, concluded that:

the trouble with these stories is that they are supposed to have happened in the early eleventh century, and the papae [*italics in the original*] left Iceland in

the ninth. These pioneers, if Irish, must have reached the vast age of Old Testament patriarchs, or else abandoned chastity, mated with native girls, and kept an Irish Catholic community going for a couple of centuries. Gudleif, however, may have been wrong in his belief that the natives who seized him spoke Irish; they may simply have been Indians who had adopted an Icelander as their leader. And where did he get his horse?³¹

On the other hand, Frederick Pohl believed the sagas in themselves were enough to "prove" Irish settlement before the Norse.³² Charles Boland agreed with Pohl and even cited Pattee's Caves as "Great Ireland,"³³ which have already been shown in this paper to be less than conclusive evidence.

Is there then any hard evidence to support the Irish claim? As Samuel Morison,³⁴ and Elaine Fowler and Louis Wright,³⁵ show, not one early Irish artifact has ever been found in America.³⁶ Therefore, after careful evaluation of all the available evidence, one feels safe to conclude that the theory of the Irish discovery of America before the time of Columbus is not valid.

NOTES

¹Frederick J. Pohl, Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 38.

²Geoffrey Ashe, et al., The Quest For America (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1971), p. 22.

³Ibid., pp. 23-4.

⁴Ibid., p. 24.

⁵Ibid., pp. 27-8.

⁶The map was reconstructed from descriptions in Navigatio, ibid., p. 41. The map is not geographically accurate according to distances.

⁷Ibid., p. 28.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Edward J. Payne, History of the New World Called America (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1892), p. 106, citing Golden Legend (1493), pp. 382-87.

¹⁰Justin Winsor (ed.), Narrative and Critical History of America (New York: AMS Press, 1967), I, p. 48, citing Humboldt's Examin. Crit., p. 163.

¹¹Ibid., citing D'Avezac's Ides d'Afrique, p. 19.

¹²Payne, History of the New World, p. 107.

¹³Hugh Hencken, "The 'Irish Monastery' at North Salem, New Hampshire," New England Quarterly, XII, No. 3 (September, 1939), pp. 429-30.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 440-41.

¹⁵"Book Credits Irish With the Discovery of America," p. 86; Carl O. Sauer, Northern Mists (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 182-84.

¹⁶ Samuel Eliot Morison, The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 27.

¹⁷ Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 43.

¹⁸ Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 27.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 27-8.

²¹ Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 36. On the other hand, the absence of records does not necessarily prove that such records did once exist.

²² Ashe, Quest For America, p. 29.

²³ William P. Cumming, Raleigh A. Skelton and David B. Quinn, The Discovery of North America (New York: American Heritage Press, 1972), p. 30.

²⁴ Payne, History of the New World, p. 106.

²⁵ Ashe, Quest For America, p. 22.

²⁶ Geoffrey Ashe, Land to the West: St. Brendan's Voyage to America (London: Collins, St. James's Place, 1962), p. 290.

²⁷ Ashe, Quest For America, p. 30. Naviagatio does not make clear just who these black dwarfs were.

²⁸ Gwen Jones, The Norse Atlantic Saga (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 106, citing the Islendingabók.

²⁹ Sauer, Northern Mists, pp. 176-78.

³⁰ Ashe, Quest For America, pp. 149-55.

³¹ Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 28.

³² Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 44.

³³ Charles M. Boland, They All Discovered America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 133.

³⁴ Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 28.

³⁵Elaine W. Fowler and Louis B. Wright (eds.), West and By North (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), p. 29.

³⁶Sauer, Northern Mists, pp. 182-84. Sauer claims that pig iron found at Belle Isle is of Irish origin.

CHAPTER VI

THE NORSE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

The discovery of America by the Norsemen has been one of the most hotly debated and controversial theories of discovery in history and has resulted in a voluminous amount of written material spanning many centuries. This material basically rehashes the same Icelandic sagas over and over, except in a few instances where startling discoveries were made that "proved" the Norse discovery. These startling discoveries will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Before examination of the theory, one observation must be made concerning the possible confusion that may occur when the terms "Norsemen" and "Viking" are used. The Norsemen who discovered Greenland and purportedly America were comparatively peaceful traders and farmers, while the Vikings were Norse freebooters and pirates who raided the coasts of Europe in their long ships. The Norsemen dealt with in this paper did not use the long ship, but the "knarr" or round

ship. Their fighting ability apparently was not as great as that of the Viking, for the fact emerges from the sagas that the Norsemen were run out of Vinland by the natives.¹

From the 9th to the 12th Century, Scandinavia was the leading sea power of Europe. In an era when the English, French and South Europeans hardly dared sail beyond the sight of land, Scandinavians from Norway, Denmark and Sweden sailed boldly to the Faroes before A.D. 800, to Iceland by 870, and to Greenland circa 985. Vinland was the farthest outpost of a loosely knit Scandinavian empire which extended east into Russia and south to Sicily.²

The origins of the Norse theory can be found in the Icelandic sagas. The word saga is well defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as a "medieval Icelandic or Norwegian prose narrative, especially one embodying the history of an Icelandic family or Norwegian King." It was not intended to be a navigational aid or to give reliable geographical data, but to amuse, instruct, or leave a family record. The Icelanders were very family-conscious, and it was fortunate that they were; otherwise these tales of discovery, repeated orally for two centuries before being recorded, would never have been preserved.

The three extant sagas of Greenland colonization and Vinland discovery and exploration are very old manuscript

copies on vellum, all the original documents being lost. As in other cases we must rely on secondary evidence for all that is known of the past.³

Arthur M. Reeves, in his book The Findings of Wineland the Good, has carefully worked out and authenticated all that is known of the history of the four sagas. Wineland (or Vinland) is first mentioned in Islendingabók, or the Book of the Icelanders, written by Ari Thorgilsson and completed by 1133.⁴ This book appears to have been a revision of an earlier work of his written for the bishops then holding office in Iceland, and is a concise, indeed severely condensed, history of Iceland from the settlement to his own day. This work is, according to Reeves, critical, accurate, based on reliable sources of information, and much concerned with chronology. The passing notice of Vinland in the book indicates a general diffusion of the knowledge of the Vinland discoveries among Ari's contemporaries at the time the book was composed.

Vinland is next briefly mentioned in Landnamabók or Book of Settlement, and the Kristni-Saga or Narrative of the Introduction of Christianity into Iceland. The first of these, Landnamabók, is a schematized record of the colonization of Iceland, and preserves a wealth of information regarding some four hundred of the principal settlers, usually telling

where they came from, where they took land, what happened to them, and through what descendants and what vicissitudes their families persisted. The settlements are dealt with in an orderly progress clockwise around the island. This book is believed also to have been written by Ari Thorgilsson, although this has never been proven.⁵ The other work, Kristni-Saga, was written by John Erlendsson for Bishop Bryniolf Sveinsson, and basically discusses the spreading of Christianity into Iceland.

The brief notices in those works yield no great amount of information concerning Vinland, although they do give clear insight as to the wide diffusion of this knowledge in the earlier saga period.

The clearest and most complete narrative of the discovery of Vinland preserved in the ancient Icelandic literature is presented in the Saga of Eric the Red. Two complete vellum texts have survived, the oldest being known as Hauksbók (hereafter referred to as Hauk's Book), named for its first owner, Hauk Erlendsson, and completed before 1334.⁶

The part of the manuscript which tells of Vinland's discovery is found on leaves 93 to 101. Originally this section had been left untitled by its owner, with the account beginning part way down on leaf 93. In the 18th century, the new owner of the book, Arni Magnusson, who was the greatest

of Icelandic collectors and an authority whose every action or utterance was held significant, gave this section a title: "The Saga of Thorfinn Karlsefni and Thorbrand Snorrason," more commonly known as "The Saga of Thorfinn."⁷ Whether there was any warrant for this other than convenience and completeness remains unknown.

Another manuscript, the Flateyjarbók (hereafter referred to as the Flatey Book), is the most extensive and perfect of the Icelandic manuscripts. Originally, it was written for John Haconsson by two priests, John Thordsson and Magnus Thorhallsson, in 1387, although some additions were made by 1394. All original vellums of the manuscript are lost and, out of necessity, it has been re-copied many times. Because of this, the Flatey Book is highly controversial. It is here and only here that the saga of Bjarni Herjulfsson's accidental discovery of North America in 986 appears; no other manuscript tells of this journey. In fact, no other Icelandic writing even mentions Bjarni.⁸

The Flatey Book also makes it apparent that the voyage of Leif Ericsson could not have occurred before 1002, yet the other sagas suggest it occurred not later than 1000.⁹ Reeves stated that it has been conjectured that the Flatey Book has been drawn from a more primitive source than those of Hauk's Book or "The Saga of Thorfinn."¹⁰

In addition to the foregoing sagas, Vinland is also mentioned in the Icelandic Annals, the chronological lists of notable events in and out of Iceland, the first of which appeared in 1280, and in an original vellum manuscript entitled Annales Reseniani, which tells of a Bishop Eric who sought Vinland in 1121. The outcome of the visit is unknown and Reeves suggests that he perished since the Annals of 1124 tell of a new bishop being ordained.¹¹

The earliest foreign mention of Vinland appeared in the work of the prebendary, Adam of Bremen, entitled Descriptio Insularum Aquilonis edited by Lindenbruch in 1595.¹²

Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

With the discovery of Vinland in print in the aforementioned manuscripts, the chief documents proving the discovery were still being kept in Iceland, virtually inaccessible to the foreign student. It was not until the 18th century that Arni Magnusson saw to it that most of the early vellums were transferred to the libraries in Copenhagen. The Flatey Book was given to King Frederick the Third as a gift by a talented Icelander, Thormod Torfaeus, about the same time. Torfaeus published the first book devoted exclusively to the discovery of Vinland in 1715. It was based mainly on the Flatey account, and generated a great

deal of interest.

The next major book on the Vinland discovery appeared in 1837, and was entitled Antiquitates Americanae. Edited by Carl Christian Rafn, the book was elaborately done, reprinting the texts of the sagas relating to the discovery, and offering explanations of the texts. The book received wide circulation and upon it were based almost all of the numerous treatises on the subject that followed. The only serious drawback was that Rafn propounded many dubious theories and hazardous conjectures which prejudiced many readers against the credibility of the records themselves.¹³

One of Rafn's theories concerned an old stone tower at Newport, Rhode Island. Rafn, while preparing Antiquitates Americanae, sent numerous letters of inquiry to various spots on the northeastern coast of North America asking if any Norse remains were in evidence. Thomas C. Webb, secretary of the Rhode Island Historical Society and a correspondent of Rafn at the time, told Rafn that the tower was indeed a surviving Norse structure, which Rafn believed. However, Benedict Arnold, the governor of Rhode Island who originally owned the land on which the tower was found, twice mentioned in his will of 1677 that he had built the tower himself.¹⁴ Yet as late as 1942, Philip Ainsworth Means, a competent authority on the Inca Indians, published Newport Tower, a book that

tried to prove the tower was Norse.¹⁵ Means was rebuffed in his efforts by Herbert O. Bingham, who described Newport Tower as "a curious blend of special pleading, wishful thinking and visionary writing."¹⁶

After the appearance of Rafn's book in 1837, fifty years would pass before another original treatise of the Vinland discovery appeared. It was Gustav Storm's Studies Relating to the Vinland Voyages, Vinland's Geography and Ethnography, published in 1887. Storm's treatise, unlike Rafn's, was philosophical, logical, apparently uninfluenced by preconceived theories, and based strictly on the records. These records clearly established the fact that some portion of the eastern coast of North America was visited by the people of Iceland and its colony in Greenland early in the 11th century. In matters of detail, however, the history of the discovery leaves wide the door to conjecture as to the actual site of Vinland. Apparently not north of the latitude of northern Newfoundland, present climatic conditions indicate it was situated somewhat south of this latitude, but how far south the aforementioned records do not show.¹⁷

A new dimension to the Norse saga occurred in the summer of 1898, when a farmer in western Minnesota made a startling discovery while pulling tree stumps on his land. Olaf Ohman, whose farm was located near the village of Kensington in

Douglas County, unearthed a strange stone 31 inches long, 16 inches wide, 6 inches thick, weighing 202 pounds, and having a large number of regular marks or scratches on the surface.¹⁸

In the fall of 1898, a correct copy of the stone's inscription was sent to O. J. Breda, Professor of Scandinavian languages at the University of Minnesota, for translation. After several months of study, and after translating the inscription as best he could, Breda concluded that the stone's inscription was not genuine because 1) the inscription mentioned Swedes and Norwegians exploring Vinland together, which was contrary to all accounts of the Vinland voyages, and 2) the language of the inscription was not Old Norse, but a mixture of Swedish, Norwegian and English, which was unthinkable in an inscription dealing with the Vinland voyages of the 11th Century.¹⁹

Breda's opinion had far-reaching influence, for when the stone was sent to Northwestern University in Evanston, George O. Curane, after consulting with European scholars, concluded that the inscription "was a clumsy fraud."²⁰ The verdict was generally accepted as final and the stone was returned to Ohman who, quite disgustedly, threw it down in front of his granary, where it lay face down for nine years until an outstanding Norse-American historian from Ephraim, Wisconsin, Hjalmar Holand, visited Ohman, asked to see the stone, and

took it with him on loan.

Holand translated the stone entirely and, after returning the stone to Minnesota, his findings were published on January 17, 1908, in one of the leading Scandinavian newspapers in America, the Skandinaven, which included a reproduction of the stone's original inscription and Holand's translation, which is shown below.

F. YÖtt R: d: FF: t d R R Y t t: P d:
 8 göter ok 22 norrmen på
 8 Goths and 22 Norwegians on
 : d P X Y t t h t P X R t: P R d
 oppaselse far þ fro
 exploration-journey from
 Y t t X t b: d F: Y t h t: Y l:
 winland of west wi
 Vinland over West We
 * X t: P X Y t R: Y t t: F: h t P X R: t t
 hæ e læser web 2 skjar en
 had camp by 2 skerries one
 P X Y h: R l h t: t d R R: P R d: t t d: h t t t:
 þags rise norr fro þeno sten
 day's journey north from this stone
 Y l: Y X A: d X P l h t t: t t: P X Y *: X P t l R
 wi war ok fiske en þagh äptir
 We were and fished one day. After
 Y l: d d Y: * t Y: P X t: P Y X t: R ö b t:
 wi kom hem fan 10 man röþe
 we came home found 10 men red
 X P: b l t t: d Y: t t t: A V M
 af bløþ og þep A V M
 with blood and dead AV[e] M[aria]
 P A X t t h t: X P: l l l Y:
 fræelse af illy
 Save from evil.
 * X R: P: Y X t h: Y t: * X Y t t: X t: h t:
 har 10 mans we hæwet at se
 have 10 men we have at the sea
 X P t l R: Y d R t: h t l P: l F: P X Y *: R l h t:
 äptir wore skip 14 þagh rise
 to look after our ship 14 days' journey
 P R d Y: t t t d: ö *: X * R: l F F F
 fram þeno ö h ahr 1362
 from this island year 1362²¹

Interest in the stone, now called the Kensington Stone, was revived and investigations began to establish authenticity, with debate centered on two main matters. One had to do with the circumstances of discovery and the other related to the origin, character and dating of the runic symbols carved on two surfaces of the stone. The larger issue was whether the symbols were a 19th century hoax or a genuine record from the 14th century, as the stone was dated 1362. A third aspect of the case had to do with alleged collateral finds of halberds and battle axes recently unearthed in various parts of Minnesota. These seemed to substantiate the genuineness of the stone.²²

The results of the investigations generally proved unfavorable as to the authenticity of the stone. Professor Erwik Wahlgren concluded that the "planting of the Minnesota stone was a clever and understandable hoax."²³ Erik Moltke, who had an expert runologist study the inscription, called the stone ". . . a childish fraud . . . made by a farmer who lacked the most elementary knowledge of medieval Scandinavian."²⁴ The halberds turned out to be tobacco cutters manufactured by the Rogers Iron Company of Springfield, Ohio, and the battle-axes were found to be premiums given to collectors of labels from Battle-Axe Plug, a popular chewing tobacco around the turn of the century.²⁵

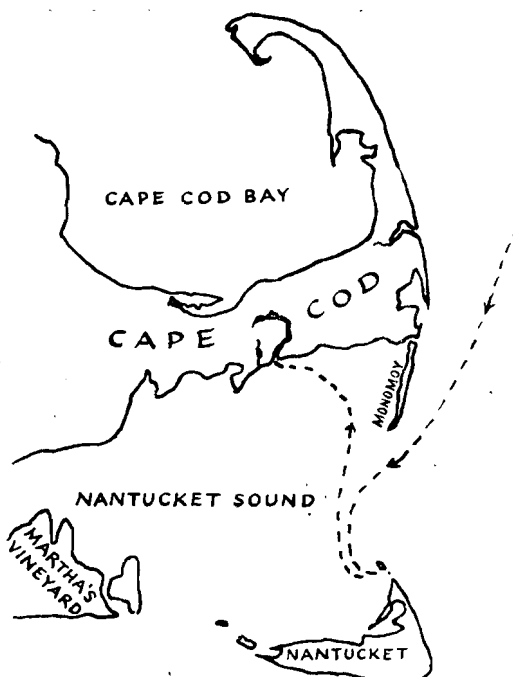
Further evidence was discovered in 1948 at Minnesota's Cormorant Lake in Becker County, just seventy-five miles from the site where Olaf Ohman discovered the Kensington Stone. Along the banks of the lake were found three large glacial boulders with triangular holes drilled in them, commonly referred to as mooring rocks, and similar to those used along the fiords of 14th Century Norway. Beside one of these rocks was a 14th Century fire steel, an implement used with flint to start fires. Further investigation turned up more mooring rocks and various other implements, all of which were purportedly left behind by the expedition of one Paul Knutson, who was ordered by King Magnus of Denmark to recruit and lead an expedition across the Atlantic in the 14th Century.²⁶ If the Kensington Stone is genuine, Paul Knutson's expedition was likely in central Minnesota in 1362.

Holand contended that the Kensington Stone had been carved by an expedition under Knutson, which first wintered in Newport and built the stone tower, then explored the coast northerly, entered Hudson Bay, traveled to central Minnesota, and after carving the inscription on the stone, fell in with the Mandan Indians and became rivals to Prince Madoc's Welshmen in converting them.²⁷ Holand's conjecture evoked a great deal of ridicule from scholars, including Samuel E. Morison.

Morison considered this story preposterous, stating that

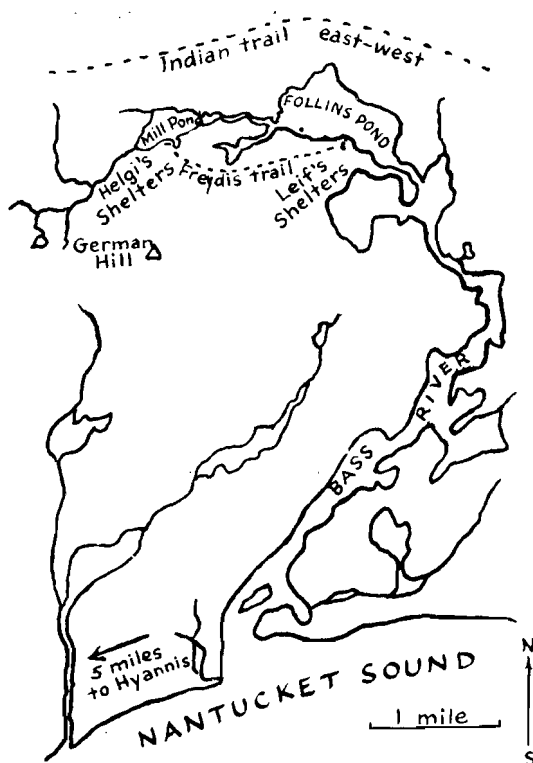
the "Norsemen were sea discoverers, not land explorers; what possible object could they have had in sailing into Hudson Bay, or through Lake Superior to the Portage, and striking out into the wilderness?"²⁸ He also pointed out that later investigation of the mooring rocks proved them to be modern forgeries.²⁹ Still, in spite of all the evidence, Holand continued to believe the stone genuine.

The controversy over the Kensington Stone was overshadowed by a new discovery made in 1952 of a possible shoring site for Norse ships purportedly erected by Leif Ericsson. The site was located in the Cape Cod region of North America at a place called Follins Pond.³⁰ The map below shows the route believed taken by Ericsson to Follins Pond.³¹



Additional sites were uncovered in 1960 and in April of 1964 at nearby Mill Pond. The sites there were purportedly

erected by a man named Helgi, who traveled to the area several years after Leif, guided by Leif's sister, Freydis. The map below shows the location of those shelters as well as those at Follins Pond.³²



Most information on this new development in the Norse saga was presented by Frederick J. Pohl in two books, The Viking Explorers, which was published in 1966, and The Viking Settlements of North America, published in 1972, the latter of which merely updated and reinforced the author's beliefs. Pohl used the Flatey Book and the sagas therein to "conclusively prove" that the Cape Cod region was the Vinland told of in the sagas. Yet, in Appendix One of his book, The Viking Explorers, Pohl listed fifty authors propounding thirty different theories as to the location of Vinland,

only nine of which agreed with the author.³³

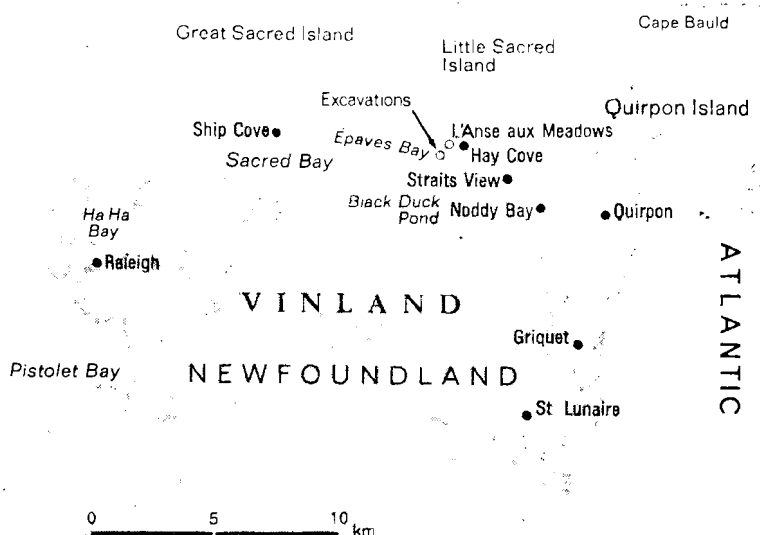
Wooden stakes, that once supposedly held the Norse ships in an upright position in the shoring shed, were recovered in 1952 at Follins Pond as evidence. Carbon-14 dating was a new process at that time and the methods essential to proper collecting and protecting of specimens for testing were not generally understood, so Pohl meekly explained that, for various reasons, the stakes were total unsuitable for the dating process.³⁴ Other evidence to prove the claim was sorely lacking.

James Enterline, in Viking America: The Norse Crossings and Their Legacy, recently commented:

The huge influx of post-Columbian white men have tamped and plowed up this land to such an extent that most archaeological traces are surely lost, and this influx occurred essentially simultaneously with any hypothetical dispersal of the Eastern Settlement, and traces of the two would be quite difficult to differentiate from one another.³⁵

Enterline's comments were echoed by others and the discovery was generally discounted for lack of conclusive evidence. While that controversy was going on, another discovery was made in 1960 that caused a great deal of comment. That discovery was of pre-Columbian Norse house sites at L'Anse aux Meadows in northern Newfoundland by Helge Ingstad. These discoveries were first reported in the November, 1964 issue of National Geographic,³⁶ and a complete report was made by Ingstad in his 1969 book, Westward to Vinland.³⁷

Until this time, no undisputed archaeological record to Norse settlement on the North American continent had been found. The Newport Tower, Kensington Stone, and the Follins-Mill Pond shoring sites had not been conclusively proved as evidence of Norse occupancy. Interest was once again generated with the finds made during the excavations at L'Anse aux Meadows. A map showing the location of L'Anse aux Meadows and the site of its excavation is displayed below.³⁸



Ingstad conducted the excavations himself at L'Anse aux Meadows, which he concluded to be Vinland itself. The excavations uncovered traces of more than five buildings and a smithy, all of which were subjected to Carbon-14 dating. The results showed the objects dated back to the year 1080, plus or minus 70 years.³⁹ No evidence was found to indicate that they were once Indian or Eskimo dwellings, and the lack of a great number of artifacts was attributed to either

disintegration in the acid terrace soil or the fact that they were either picked up by the Indians or Eskimos or they were simply taken home to the Norse themselves.⁴⁰

Further investigations at L'Anse aux Meadows turned up four collapsed cairns, which were rounded or conical heaps of stones used as markers for graves or for landmarks easily sighted from sea. Erection of cairns was a typically Norse custom in Norway, Greenland and Iceland, and they were always placed on high ground some distance apart. Yet, at L'Anse aux Meadows, the cairns were mysteriously found on low ground and were close together. Ingstad could not provide any definite answers to the questions that arose in connection with that oddity.⁴¹

In 1964, Ingstad headed a second expedition to L'Anse aux Meadows hoping to discover an article so obviously and conspicuously of Norse origin that no one would doubt the Norsemen had lived there in the distant past. The discovery was made when a small ring made of soapstone was found and identified as a Norse spindle-whorl, originally used in the spinning of wool. The spindle-whorl was compared to one of Eskimo origin and no similarity was found, which proved to Ingstad that Norse women were once there, which in turn confirmed information found in the Saga of Eric the Red.⁴²

Ingstad made five further expeditions to L'Anse aux

Meadows, seven in all, and subsequent finds were all subjected to Carbon-14 dating. A total of sixteen such datings were made and the items proved to date to somewhat before or a little after 1000.⁴³

Those findings evoked a great deal of written literature, much of it favorable. Herbert C. Taylor, Professor of Anthropology at Western Washington College, supported Ingstad's findings, although he did not conclude that L'Anse aux Meadows was Vinland, merely a Norse settlement.⁴⁴ This view concurred with others, including Farley Mowat in West Viking.⁴⁵ James Enterline believed L'Anse aux Meadows to be "Hvitramannaland" of the "Land of the White Men" referred to in the Incelandic sagas.⁴⁶

There were those who totally accepted Ingstad's findings and the belief that L'Anse aux Meadows was Vinland. Among these were Samuel Eliot Morison in The European Discovery of America⁴⁷ and Gwen Jones in The Norse Atlantic Saga, who had an important supporting bibliography in Appendix IV.⁴⁸

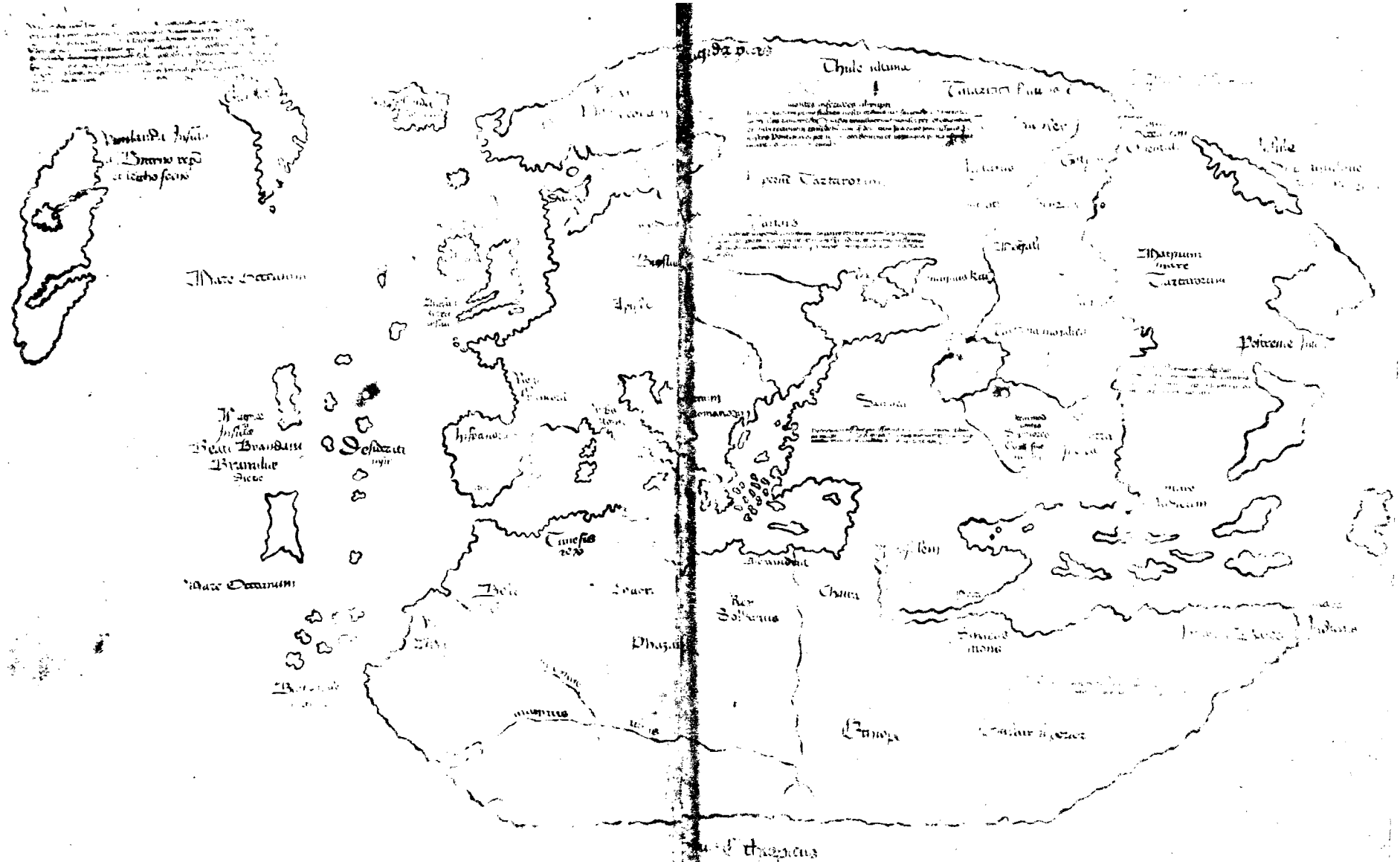
A criticism of the L'Anse aux Meadows site and the findings made there came from Einar Haugen, a Harvard colleague of Morison, who told Morison that Ingstad's evidence was inconclusive for want of artifacts and inscriptions of Greenland origin. In addition, Haugen stated that Ingstad's identification of the word "vinber" from the sagas as berries

was incorrect, that they were really grapes, and that both they and the "mosur" pointed to a more southerly site for Vinland.⁴⁹

Discussion went on over Ingstad's findings, but during the height of that discussion, in 1965, Yale University announced on October 11 that Yale had made the most astonishing discovery concerning Vinland and the Norse discovery of it. University officials had in their possession the first graphic evidence of that discovery, a vellum map of the world drawn about 1440 in Basel, Switzerland, by some unknown man.⁵⁰

The amazing story of the map's discovery and authentication involved an almost unbelievable one-in-a-million coincidence. Laurance Witten, a New Haven book dealer, had bought, from a private collection in Europe, a slim volume bound in recent calf which contained a map of the world, including Iceland, Greenland and Vinland, and a hitherto unknown account on manuscript, later referred to as the "Tartar Relation," of John de Plano Carpini's visit to the Mongols in 1245-47. A reproduction of the Vinland Map is found on the next page.⁵¹

Both items were shown to Thomas Marston and Alexander Vietor, who were convinced the map was pre-Columbian, but were disturbed by the fact the material was in a 19th century binding and that the worm holes in the map and manuscript did



Small block of text in the upper left corner, likely a title or introductory note.

Thule Islanda

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not match up so as to indicate that they had been originally bound together. However, seven months later, after Marston had purchased from a London book dealer a fragment of a 15th Century copy of a medieval history called Speculum Historiale, written in the 13th Century by Vincent of Beauvais, Witten compared the fragment with the map and manuscript, fitted all three together in their proper sequence, first the map, then Speculum and "Tartar" last, and found that the worm holes matched perfectly and that the handwriting on all three appeared to be the same.⁵²

It was in February and March of 1966 that two articles by G. R. Crone, who was the map curator of the Royal Geographical Society, appeared which first raised serious question concerning the dating and hence in some sense the authenticity of the Vinland Map, as it was now called. The articles were entitled "How Authentic is the Vinland Map?" which appeared in Encounter,⁵³ and "The Vinland Map Cartographically Considered," which appeared in Geographical Journal.⁵⁴

In these articles, Crone agreed with Skelton that the Vinland Map was without a doubt based on Andrea Bianco's world map of 1436 (which is, and, so far as is known, has always been in the Marciana Library in Venice) and that both were based on a common model. However, Crone pointed out

that a fold in the Bianco map had been copied into the Vinland Map, thus the man who produced the map was a copyist, not a cartographer. Crone further stated that, granted the estimated date of 1430 for the Bianco map, one must have allowed at least fifty years for the telltale fold to have developed, and, that being so, the Vinland Map dated to later than 1486 and was probably post-Columbian. If it was post-Columbian, one was left free to assume that retrospective attempts were made to indicate knowledge of the New World before the voyages of Columbus.

Other criticisms followed those of Crone's, one of which, by Anne Taylor in the Washington Post, claimed the ink on the map was not circa 1440 because it lacked iron in its composition.⁵⁵ This caused some to believe that the map was a counterfeit drawn on paper dated 1440.

Samuel Eliot Morison believed that if genuine, the map would be the only pre-Columbian one to represent Vinland or to make Greenland an island, as well as confirm the voyage of Bjarni Herjulfsson in 986 and Bishop Eric's voyage of 1121. However, Morison had serious reservations about the map for several reasons, the chief of which was that the Vinland Map had "Isolanda," "Gronelanda" and "Vinlanda" corresponding so closely to the outlines and relative positions of Iceland, Greenland below 72^o north, and Baffin Island on modern maps,

that they must have been dubbed in by some clever forger at a much later date. And he concludes that, prior to 1650, Greenland, as an island, had never been depicted as such on any map, but as a peninsula of Asia.⁵⁶

Much of the debate over the Vinland Map was neither scholarly nor historical. Reactions varying from wounded national pride to scholarly outrage at the secrecy under which the book had been prepared caused the historical pot not only to boil but run over. In an effort to convert some of the heat into light, the Department of American Studies of the Smithsonian Institution, chaired by Wilcomb Washburn, organized a conference to be held on November 15 and 16, 1966, at the Museum of History and Technology of the Smithsonian.

The purpose of the conference was neither to establish the authenticity of the map nor deny it. It was an attempt to find out more about the map by bringing together a number of leading scholars in the field of cartographic history who had dealt with the Vinland Map and the "Tarter Relation," to facilitate an exchange of views on the subject, and to disseminate the results to the world of scholarship at large.

The majority of those present at the conference were skeptical of the authenticity of the map and some of the more pertinent opinions rendered include those of Armando Cortesão, a Professor from Portugal and the foremost expert in

cartography at the conference, who stated "In the present circumstances, I cannot say that I am absolutely sure that the Vinland Map is not a modern fake and that we are not involved in, or rather the victims of, a nasty swindle."⁵⁷

Boleslaw Szczesniak, Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, said:

There is no direct, clear, or established reference in the Tartar Relation to the existence of Vinland. There is no evidence which can permit a scholar to consider the two documents as being tied together from their "birth."⁵⁸

The results of the conference were published in 1971, and, although these results were generally unfavorable toward the Vinland Map, the map was still considered genuine until more conclusive tests could be run on its ink and paper.

The Saturday morning edition of The New York Times for January 26, 1974, ended any controversy as to the authenticity of the Vinland Map, for Yale University had announced that the prized map had been proved to be an elaborate and highly skillful forgery.⁵⁹

More details were carried the next day in the Sunday edition of The Times. The ink of the map had been found by new chemical tests to have been produced not earlier than the 1920's. The tests, performed by Walter C. McGrone Associates, included micro x-ray diffraction and electron microscopy analysis, and showed the presence of anatase, an ink component developed after 1920. Yale officials commented that the tests

were final and conclusive, but should cast no shadow on other evidence of Norse discovery of America in A.D. 1000 or on authenticity of the two 15th Century manuscripts associated with the map. The officials also stated that the paper of the Vinland Map was determined by tests to have been produced in Switzerland around 1433, but the identity of the forger had not yet been determined.⁶⁰

More was yet to come, though, for on February 3, 1974, The New York Times published another story by Yale officials. Two Yale professors, Robert Lopez and Konstantin Reichardt, both of whom had participated in the 1966 Smithsonian Conference on the Vinland Map, believed they had pinpointed the forger, one Professor Luka Jelic of the Seminary of Zadar in Yugoslavia, who had died in 1922. Jelic had spent much of his time, the professors recounted, proclaiming to derisive audiences the existence of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in Vinland centuries before Columbus, and purportedly had discovered hundreds of church documents and maps relating to Vinland in the Vatican library. Lopez and Reichardt went on to relate that Jelic had committed a major and telltale error in ecclesiastical phrasing in a paper he twice presented to scientific congresses. The error was found nowhere else in the thousands of years of church history and writings, but appeared almost word for word on the Vinland Map. His paper,

"The Evangelization of America Before Columbus," was submitted to the International Catholic Scientific Congress in Paris in 1891 and again in Brussels in 1894. It told of a Bishop Eric sent west to rediscover Vinland centuries after Leif Ericsson. The travels of the bishop, which proved unsuccessful, have not been disputed by scholars. But Professor Jelic called him "Bishop of Greenland and the neighboring regions" in his paper, almost the exact wording of an inscription found on the Vinland Map.⁶¹

The last article to appear concerning the Vinland Map, and the Norse saga in general, was found in the pages of The New York Times on February 7, 1974. Great Britain's Royal Geographical Society had admitted they had not been fooled about the genuineness of the Vinland Map, that is, all except one member. George Painter, one of the authors of The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation, the book that started the whole affair in 1965, still maintained the map was authentic and a product of medieval minds. Asked why he still believed the map was genuine after tests had proved that it was not, Painter's only comment was "What would you say if scientific evidence showed Leonardo da Vinci's notebook was written by Charlie Chaplin?"⁶²

Critique on Validity of the Theory

The voluminous amount of material written on the Norse discovery of America offers one the opportunity to examine nearly every aspect, pro and con, on the subject. A few observations and conclusions can be made from this study.

First was the controversy concerning the differences between Hauk's account of the discovery and the Flatey account. The major differences dealt with the voyage of Bjarni Herjulfsson, which was found only in the Flatey account. This controversy seems to have become less significant after the publication of Rafn's Antiquitates Americanae in 1837, which was based on the Flatey Book. Nothing could be found in research to explain why this was so, but it was evident that there must have been general acceptance of the Flatey account, for most books after this time were based on it.

Second, the true location of Vinland has proved to be a highly debatable point in most works after 1898 as authors tried to pinpoint its location on the basis of what they could decipher from the Icelandic sagas. Some authors used this to justify the discoveries that were made, such as the Newport Tower, the Follins and Mill Pond shoring sites, and the finds made at the L'Anse aux Meadows excavations. Yet, with well over thirty different theories on Vinland's true

location now in existence, it can only be concluded that no general agreement on one location can be expected in the near future and the exact location of Vinland may never be known.

Lastly, most of the archaeological evidence recovered to date to prove Norse settlement in North America, such as the Newport Tower, the Kensington Stone and the shoring sites at Follins and Mill Ponds, have been shown to be less than conclusive. In addition, the only graphic evidence of discovery, the Vinland Map, has proved to be a forgery.

Is there then any hard evidence, outside of the sagas, to conclusively prove Norse settlement in North America? If there is, it must be the discoveries made by Helge Ingstad at L'Anse aux Meadows in northern Newfoundland. This conclusion is based on the following evidence: 1) the buildings and smithy uncovered were almost identical to those found in the countries of Iceland and Greenland; 2) no evidence has been shown to prove these settlements were of Eskimo or Indian origin; 3) the spindle-whorl found at the site in 1964, when compared to one of Eskimo origin, was found not to be similar in any way; and 4) a total of sixteen Carbon-14 datings have shown the artifacts recovered to date a little before or a little after A.D. 1000, the date of discovery as told in the Icelandic sagas. For these reasons, it seems safe to conclude

that the theory of Norse discovery and settlement in America before Columbus is valid.

NOTES

¹Samuel Eliot Morison, The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 32, 34.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³William H. Babcock, Early Norse Visits to North America (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1913), p. 64.

⁴Arthur M. Reeves, The Finding of Vineland the Good: The History of the Icelandic Discovery of America (London, 1895), p. 7.

⁵Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁶Ibid., p. 19.

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

⁸Ibid., pp. 55-56.

⁹Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 82.

¹²Ibid., p. 92.

¹³Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁴Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 74, citing Rhode Island Colonial Records, Vol. I, p. 511.

¹⁵Philip Ainsworth Means, The Newport Tower (New York: H. Holt and Company, Inc., 1942).

¹⁶Herbert Bingham, The Old Stone Mill (Newport, Rhode Island: Newport Historical Society, 1955), p. 27.

- ¹⁷Gustav Storm, Studies Relating to the Vinland Voyages: Vinland's Geography and Ethnography (Christiana, Norway: A. W. Brogger, 1887), pp. 293-372.
- ¹⁸Hjalmar R. Holand, Westward From Vinland (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1940), p. 97.
- ¹⁹"Done in Runes," The Minneapolis Journal, February 22, 1899, p. 1.
- ²⁰Holand, Westward From Vinland, p. 99.
- ²¹Frederick J. Pohl, The Viking Explorers (New York: Thomas Crowell Company, 1966), p. 208. The Kensington Stone inscription with Holand's translation appeared in Skandinaven, January 17, 1908.
- ²²Theodore C. Blegen, The Kensington Rune Stone: New Light on an Old Riddle (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1968), p. 5.
- ²³Erik Wahlgren, The Kensington Stone: A Mystery Solved (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 181.
- ²⁴Erik Moltke, "The Ghost of the Kensington Stone," Scandinavian Studies, XXV (February, 1953), pp. 1-14.
- ²⁵Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 77.
- ²⁶Thomas R. Henry, "The Riddle of the Kensington Stone," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXI (August 21, 1948), p. 110.
- ²⁷Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 77, citing Hjalmar Holand's A Pre-Columbian Crusade to America, Chapter IV, 1962.
- ²⁸Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 76.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Pohl, Viking Explorers, p. 157.
- ³¹Map showing route taken by Leif Ericsson to Follins Pond from ibid., p. 94.
- ³²Map showing location of shelters at Follins and Mill Ponds from ibid., p. 99.
- ³³Ibid., pp. 179-80.

³⁴Map showing location of shelters at Follins and Mill Ponds. Pohl, Viking Explorers, p. 159.

³⁵James R. Enterline, Viking America: The Norse Crossings and Their Legacy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 153-54.

³⁶Helge M. Ingstad, "Vinland Ruins Prove Vikings Found the New World," National Geographic, CXXVI, No. 5 (November, 1964), pp. 708-34.

³⁷Helge M. Ingstad, Westward to Vinland (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969).

³⁸Map showing location of L'Anse aux Meadows and site of excavations from ibid., p. 134.

³⁹Ingstad, Westward to Vinland, p. 135.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 136.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 141-42.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 214-15.

⁴³Ibid., p. 216.

⁴⁴Herbert C. Taylor, Jr., "Vinland and the Way Thither" in Man Across the Sea: Problems of the Pre-Columbian Contacts, eds. J. Charles Kelley, et al. (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. 246-48.

⁴⁵Farley Mowat, West Viking (Toronto: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1965), Appendix N, p. 451.

⁴⁶Enterline, Viking America, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁷Morison, Northern Voyages, pp. 68-9.

⁴⁸Gwen Jones, The Norse Atlantic Saga (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), Appendix IV, pp. 220-23.

⁴⁹Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 69.

⁵⁰Thomas Marston, George Painter and Raleigh Skelton, The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 3.

⁵¹Ingstad, Westward to Vinland, end papers showing Vinland Map.

⁵²Taylor, Man Across the Sea, p. 248.

⁵³G. R. Crone, "How Authentic is the Vinland Map?," Encounter, No. 26 (February, 1966), pp. 75-85.

⁵⁴G. R. Crone, "The Vinland Map Cartographically Considered," Geographical Journal, CXXXII (March, 1966), Chapter I, pp. 75-80.

⁵⁵Anne Taylor, "Viking Claim Disputed: Vinland Map's Ink in Doubt," The Washington Post, February 12, 1967.

⁵⁶Morison, Northern Voyages, p. 69.

⁵⁷Wilcomb E. Washburn (ed.), Proceedings of the Vinland Map Conference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 16.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁵⁹Michael Knight, "Yale Says Prized 'Vinland Map' of North America Is a Forgery," The New York Times, January 26, 1974, p. 1.

⁶⁰"Yale Unmasks a Fake, But Who's the Forger?," The New York Times, January 27, 1974, Sec. 4, p. 7.

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CHAPTER VII

THE WELSH DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Origin of the Theory

The persistence of legendary history is a delight and an exasperation to the modern scholar, a delight because of the romantic interlude which folk-tales bring to the drudgery of searching dusty tomes, and an exasperation because, unlike the scientific fact buried in a monograph or extrapolated from statistics, the legend lives. In fact, it has no other being than its life, and like man himself, it must be renewed, retold, from generation unto generation. Of such lineage comes the tale of Madoc, Prince of Wales, purportedly discoverer of America in the year A.D. 1170 at Mobile Bay, Alabama.

The story of Prince Madoc begins in the misty hills of northern Wales among a Celtic people given to bold and violent deeds and so fond of recalling them that their poet-historians (bards) were honored even as their warriors. The bardic tradition was oral, and centuries passed before their tales took written form. Much appears to be lost, and what remains is more puzzling than enlightening.

No authentic reference to Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd antedates a poem by 15th Century poet Davydd ap Meredydd ap Rhys, which was composed in the year 1450, which tells of Prince Madoc leaving the country.¹

The theory received its first academic currency in 1578 when a map by John Dee was discovered in the British Museum. The map was of the North Atlantic region and a statement printed on the back of the map read "Circa An. 1170. I. The Lord Madoc, sonne of Owen Gwynedd Prynce of Northwales, led a colonie and inhabited Terra Florida or thereabouts."²

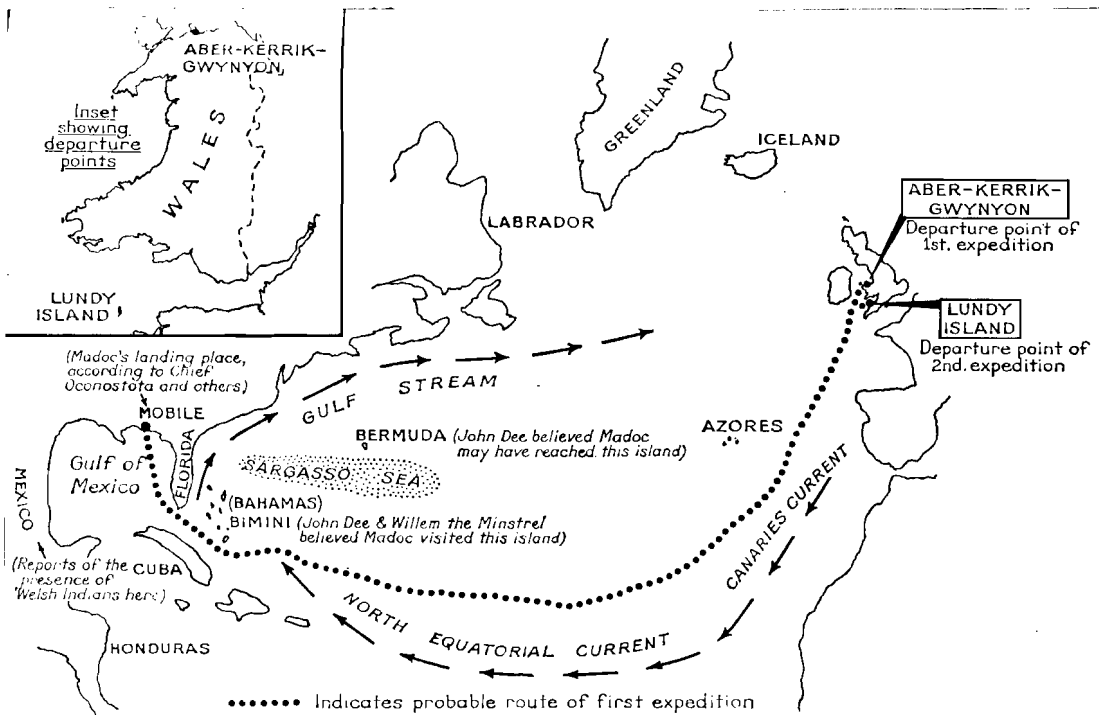
The earliest extant version of the full Madocean saga did not appear until 1583, when a pamphlet by Sir George Peckham, dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham, then Secretary of State in England, appeared in Peckham's A True Report of the Late Discoveries of the Newfound Landes.³ In this work, Peckham claimed that Madoc, after his voyage to America, returned to Wales with news of his discoveries.⁴ Only one voyage is mentioned in this account.

The Madoc legend is given its definitive form in The Historie of Cambria, published in London in 1584.⁵ The book was originally begun by Caradoc of Llancasfan, who had chronicled Wales' history only to the year 1157 when he died. Caradoc made no mention of Madoc in his manuscript, which then fell into the hands of Humphrey Lloyd, who decided to

extend the Historie to 1270, include the Madoc story, and then translate the work into English. Lloyd, however, died (in 1568) before the book could be completed, so a Doctor David Powel took charge of it, finished the history to 1270 (including the Madoc story), and translated the work into English as Lloyd had wished.⁶

Lloyd told of the voyage of Madoc, wherein he reached Hispania or Florida.⁷ Powel added to this when he told of a second, hitherto unknown voyage, in which the Prince, after returning to Wales to tell of his first voyage,⁸ then made a second, landing somewhere near the Gulf of Mexico where people recognized the sign of the cross.⁹

Richard Hakluyt, an associate of Powel at the time, took the story and connected the discovery of Mexico with this second voyage in his Principal Navigations.¹⁰ Hakluyt said, in conclusion, that "I am of the opinion that the land whereunto he came was some part of the West Indies."¹¹ Hakluyt's account was widely disseminated and repeated during the 17th Century. A map showing the purported routes taken by Madoc is found on the next page.¹²



Historical Development and Current Status of the Theory

The Madoc story was next recounted in 1634 by Sir Thomas Herbert in A Relation of Some Years Travaile,¹³ which was an account of Herbert's travels in Persia in 1626. According to Frederick Pohl, Herbert had a good reputation as a realistic narrator of what he observed in Persia and therefore his history of Madoc was equally objective and was honestly based on things he had read. Unfortunately, according to Pohl,

. . . we cannot check these manuscript sources, which were in a library later destroyed by fire. It is a fair assumption that the pre-Columbian records did exist and that Welshmen long before Columbus believed that Madoc crossed the Atlantic in 1170.¹⁴

Welsh scholars, however, have found no evidence that Herbert's stories are anything but inventions.¹⁵

Linguistic evidences were brought into prominence by Morgan Jones, who recounted that he was taken prisoner by the Tuscarora Indians in North Carolina in 1660. His life was spared, he asserted, when he prayed aloud in Welsh and the Indians understood him.¹⁶ Jones had written a statement of this account in 1685-86, but it did not see print until 1740, when Gentleman's Magazine published it.¹⁷

Jones's story was widely copied and commented on in the 18th century, but a significant fact was that the story led to similar experiences concerning "Welsh Indians" suddenly coming to light. In 1768, Charles Beatty enlarged the story by stating that the Carolina Indians had a "Welsh Bible" in their possession, which he said they could not read, but which Beatty read and explained to them in Welsh to their great edification.¹⁸

The idea of a "Welsh Bible" in the possession of the Carolina Indians was ridiculed by nearly every scholar and writer, including Bernard DeVoto. DeVoto pointed out that presumably Madoc had brought a "Welsh Bible" with him in 1170, which was an impossibility since 1170 was four centuries before the scriptures were translated into Welsh.¹⁹ Therefore, if the Carolina Indians had a "Welsh Bible," and there is no physical evidence that they

had one, it certainly wasn't Madoc who brought it over.

Meanwhile, in 1784, John Filson suggested that numerous strange structures found from Alabama to Kentucky were the handiwork of the descendants of Madoc.²⁰ It was not until 1950 that Zella Armstrong put an end to that belief. After reviewing these structures, which were the Old Stone Fort in Tennessee, DeSoto Falls in Alabama, and Fort Mountain in Georgia, she stated that ". . . it should be made clear that no clear proof that the Welsh people built the forts exists and it is improbable that proof will ever be discovered."²¹

Another belief that the Welsh were in Kentucky at one time was thought to have been "proved" in 1799, when six skeletons in armor were uncovered in that state. The skeletons' armor breast-plates supposedly had the Welsh coat-of-arms on them,²² yet no experts ever examined the breast-plates to authenticate this claim, and the breast-plates mysteriously disappeared soon after their discovery.²³

These stories, popular as they were, became vastly overshadowed as the 18th century drew to a close by a new pastime: the search for the "Welsh Indians." The prospect of contacting these Indians stirred the enthusiasm of many, but none more than a small band of Welsh scholars and antiquaries living in London in the years 1789 to 1792.

Inspired by a happy combination of patriotic zeal, religious dedication and fervid imagination, these men bombarded the newspapers and magazines with their theories. John Williams, who had been interested in the Madoc legend for thirty years, and his friends of this group, had found little to add to the earlier stories until they encountered a William Augustus Bowles, a British partisan among the Indians in Spanish West Florida, who was in London in the guise of a General and Chief of the Creek Nation.

William Owen, one member of the group, interviewed Bowles on the subject of the Welsh Indians soon after his arrival in London. Bowles declared that he knew of these Indians and specifically stated that they were the Padoucas, or White Indians.²⁴ When a map of North America was produced, Bowles quickly pointed out the range of their territory to be in the western half of the Mississippi valley. He admitted, however, that he had never been in their territory.²⁵

Bowles's account was fully believed by this group of Welshmen, and his case seemed to be supported by further evidence. Richard Burnell and his son, who were Augusta, Georgia, Indian traders, declared that the Welsh Indians did exist, and cited as proof his personal contacts with them on both sides of the Mississippi River.²⁶ Owen, Williams, and the rest were now thoroughly convinced of the existence of

Welsh Indians, and negative opinion carried absolutely no weight, even though they had at hand the declaration of the famed and widely-traveled frontiersman George Croghan, who said that ". . . the whole story is founded in delusion."²⁷

Still, interest in the theory abounded, and plans were made by one Iolo Morganwy, the Bard of Liberty, to emigrate to America in 1792 to search for the Welsh Indians. Morganwy was to be accompanied by a young man from Caernarvonshire named John Evans. By 1792, however, Morganwy had become afraid of the journey and the expense, so Evans decided to come alone in September of 1792. Evans arrived in Baltimore on October 10, 1792, and then set out for St. Louis, where he arrived in the Spring of 1793.²⁸

Because relations between Spain and England were rather tense, Evans, an Englishman, found himself in jail soon after his arrival. He remained in jail for nearly two years before his release in early 1795. In August of that year, a Spanish trading company in St. Louis, the Missouri Company, decided to send a third expedition, commanded by a Scot, James Mackay, to the nearby Mandan villages (two previous expeditions had ended in disaster). Mackay, who decided to take Evans along with him on the expedition, was doubtful that Welsh Indians existed, even though he realized the name Padouca was considered synonymous with Madoc and his lost colony.²⁹

In February of 1796, Mackay sent Evans on alone to a Mandan settlement to dislodge a French Canadian, Jusseaune, who had erected a British trading company there. This task was completed by Evans on September 23, 1796, and Evans remained with the Mandans until May 9, 1797, studying both the habits and language of these "white" Indians. Evans later concluded that in manners and customs, the Mandans differed but little from the other tribes.³⁰ Eight months later, however, the celebrated Welsh explorer, David Thompson, visited the Mandans and left a vivid description of his journey to them and their manners and customs. That account tried to refute Evans's conclusion that the Welsh Indians did not exist.³¹

After Evans returned to the east coast, he made the statement that he believed the Welsh Indians did not exist, and that neither the Padoucas nor any other tribe in that part of the continent could speak one word of Welsh nor anything similar thereto.³² Evans died in 1799, and all the information he had gathered was passed on to President Thomas Jefferson by a Daniel Clark of New Orleans.³³

Jefferson's thoughts on the possibility of the existence of Welsh Indians were summed up in one sentence: "I neither believe nor disbelieve where I have no evidence."³⁴ Still, the Mackay-Evans expedition had revived the Madoc legend to

the point that Jefferson instructed Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to keep an eye out for Welsh Indians during their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase area in 1804, hoping it would settle the Welsh question once and for all. However, Lewis and Clark later reported that they could find no trace of Welsh Indians in the area.³⁵

With the Evans report and the statement of Lewis and Clark, one feels that the legend should have ended then and there, but it did not as too much racial emotion had been aroused. The legend reached full flower in Robert Southey's epic poem "Madoc," at which he worked intermittently for seven years, finally publishing it in 1805. The poem is the sort of thing that the English-reading public relished in the Romantic era. Madoc, in Southey's poem, not only planted a Welsh colony in North America, but he and his nephew Llewelyn sailed a fleet into the Gulf of Mexico and intervèned in Aztec politics, with allies and enemies named Aztlan, Tlalala, and Zezozomoc.³⁶

A new dimension to the legend occurred five years later when Major Amos Stoddard, of the United States Army at Fort Columbus, New York, wrote to Governor John Sevier of Tennessee (on August 30, 1810) for information on the Welsh people on that continent. Sevier's reply to Stoddard, on October 9, 1810, tells that while campaigning in 1782 in

the highlands where Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee meet, Sevier visited the strange stone and earth works in the Chattanooga area. Shortly thereafter, he inquired of an old Cherokee Chief, Oconastota, as to what their origin might be. The old chieftain told Sevier his grandfathers and father had told him that white men from Carolina, who called themselves Welsh, had built them. These men, Oconastota stated, had first landed at the Bay of Mobile, and eventually worked their way north.³⁷

Controversy over the Madoc legend continued, but in 1849, Welsh historian Thomas Stephens dealt the legend a severe blow in his book, Literature of the Kymry, which reprints much of the original Welsh poetry. Stephens pointed out that none of this poetry mentions Madoc by name, although Stephens cited passages that probably referred to Madoc, and concluded that although he did not know how much of the Madoc story was truth, ". . . that Madoc disappeared from his native country is proved beyond a doubt. . ." ³⁸ Stephens, however, cautioned that the poetry did not prove anything more than Madoc's departure.³⁹

Stephens, however, would do more than simply deal the legend a severe blow. Many authors feel that he dealt the legend a fatal blow by the end of the 19th century. This process began in 1858 when Stephens entered a contest at the

Llangollen Eisteddfod (a bardic and scholarly festival), of which the assigned subject was "The Discovery of America in the 12th Century by Prince Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd."⁴⁰

Stephens's entry distinguished two classes of alleged proof, one of which was the meager Welsh literary matter, which was rejected as worthless. The other was the long-standing belief that somewhere in America travellers had come across Welsh-speaking Indians, who had always been placed by rumor outside the zone of settlement. Every time it became practicable to check the report, contended Stephens, the Indians had been transferred somewhere else. The whole thing was termed by Stephens as another case of the rope-trick phenomenon, and he concluded there was no case for Madoc whatsoever.⁴¹ The entry was disqualified because it found the Madoc story false. Hence, it would not see print, at least for quite some time.

Before that time, however, artist-explorer George Catlin would make yet another case for the existence of the Welsh Indians in 1876 in Illustrations of the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians.⁴² In this book, Catlin gave a detailed picture of the Mandan Indians and why he believed them to be the Welsh Indians, even to pointing out the similarities in certain Welsh and Mandan words.⁴³ According to author Richard Deacon, "Catlin was told that

among the Mandans legend had it that 'they descended from the first white man to come to this country,' but that this was something they normally told nobody."⁴⁴

While Catlin's book was widely circulated and commented on, the Madoc legend began to wane, especially after the appearance of Thomas Stephens's Madoc: An Essay on the Discovery of America by Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd in 1893.⁴⁵ "On every point," Stephens concluded, the evidence "is directly at variance with, and completely upsets, all the allegations usually made."⁴⁶ According to author David B. Quinn, not until this book was published did almost all serious students drop the belief that the Madoc story rested on credible evidence.⁴⁷

A few persistent Welsh-Americans drew the modern case for Madoc, including Zella Armstrong, who published her inspirational volume, Who Discovered America? The Amazing Story of Madoc, in 1950. Assuming everything possible from the discredited Welsh sources, and drawing upon a recent fictional treatment of the legend for further details, she suggested that Madoc left Wales because of the death of his young wife, and argued that Madoc was "propelled" by wind, wave, and ocean current to Mobile Bay.⁴⁸ Armstrong also contended that three trips to America were made, although Madoc did not make the third since he was never heard from

again after the second voyage. How else, she argued, could the results of the second voyage have been known if not for the fact that a third voyage had taken place?⁴⁹

Lastly, concerning the Welsh Indians, Armstrong said that many people felt these Indians, with blond hair, blue eyes and fair skin, could not be related to the Welsh, who typically have darker features. Armstrong accounted for the Welsh Indian's features by saying that the Mandans no doubt mingled with the Norsemen in the area as well as the Irish.⁵⁰

A rising tide of interest in the legend helped to inspire the Virginia Cavalier Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to erect, in 1953, a marker at Fort Morgan, Alabama in memory of Madoc and his purported landing at Mobile Bay in 1170.⁵¹

The latest author to take up the cause of Madoc is Richard Deacon, whose 1964 Madoc and the Discovery of America reopens debate with certain pieces of new evidence and reinterpretation of some of the old. Yet Deacon is forced to assume a line of approach common to all Madoceans: since it cannot be proven beyond a doubt that there never was a Prince Madoc who sailed to America, one may freely proceed on the assumption that there really was such an adventurer.

Deacon first considered the Welsh literary evidence for Madoc's existence, evidence which has not been considered

very significant since the devastation wrought by Thomas Stephens. Although Deacon admitted the difficulties of his sources and pointed out that the translation of Welsh poetry often ". . . means substituting three English words for one Welsh word and losing the esoteric magic of the Cymry,"⁵² Deacon did make a better case for Madoc than his predecessors have ever done.

Next, Deacon cited the voyages of Thor Heyerdahl to prove the possibility of such long voyages in relatively primitive craft in both the Atlantic and Pacific,⁵³ yet one must wonder how Madoc's ship, the "Gwennan Gorn," ever made the journey held together with stag horns instead of nails.⁵⁴

The Welsh Indians, according to Deacon, did exist, but surprisingly enough, he called William Bowles "a consummate liar."⁵⁵ Concerning John Evans, Deacon contends ". . . that Evans was under Spanish orders; as an agent of their government he was only allowed to say what they wished him to say."⁵⁶ Zella Armstrong made a similar charge, concluding that the \$2000 paid to Evans by the Spanish government amounted to nothing more than hush money.⁵⁷ However, Robert Rea said this simply will not do because too much is known of Evans and his travels on the upper Missouri. Since Deacon does not meet the challenge posed by Professor David Williams's research on this phase of the question, concludes Rea,

Evans's report stands uncontroverted.⁵⁸

Deacon seems to place great value on the statement of Chief Oconastota and his evidence for a Mobile Bay landing, but does not deal with the internal problem of the Indians' report, namely, that the same people called Welsh, who crossed the Atlantic and landed to Mobile Bay, were the same white people who formerly inhabited the Carolina area.⁵⁹ If Oconastota's geography was a bit vague, John Sevier's should not have been, but neither should that of Deacon who tracked the peripatetic Welshmen along an Indian trail leading from Old Stone Fort to Nashville, Kentucky.⁶⁰ Inevitably, Deacon traced the Madogwys until they turned into the Mandans.

Richard Deacon certainly brought a more constructive imagination to the riddle of Prince Madoc than any previous writer on the subject. Had he been equally critical and careful of his material, a more impressive case might have emerged. Still, the tale has gained a new life through his retelling and has led to the latest article on Madoc by Robert Rea, which appeared in the Spring, 1968, edition of the Alabama Historical Quarterly.⁶¹ This article does an excellent job of reviewing the Madoc legend, and hints throughout that the legend is nothing but folklore.

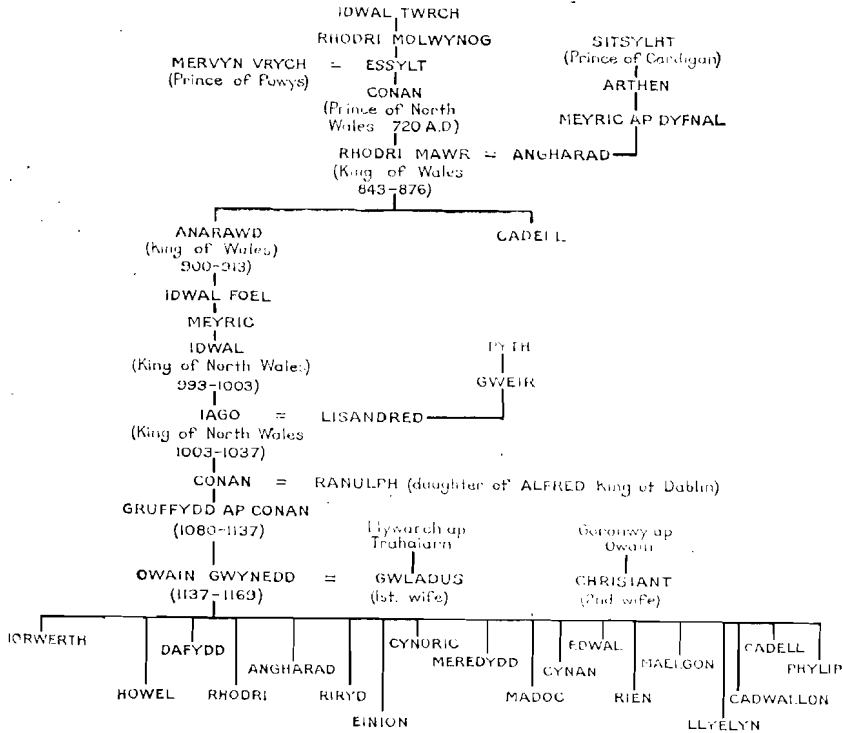
Critique on Validity of the Theory

The voluminous amount of written material on the Welsh theory is only exceeded by that of the Norse and Columbus, so one is able to examine nearly every aspect of the "Welsh discovery" quite easily. It seems that to evaluate this theory properly, and thereby determine whether or not it is valid, one must consider four questions and the answers to them.

The first question is whether or not Prince Madoc and Owain Gwynedd really existed. Bernard DeVoto has claimed that Madoc never existed.⁶² Thomas Stephens has stated that the earliest bardic poems never mentioned Madoc by name,⁶³ while Geoffrey Ashe claimed Madoc did exist.⁶⁴ Richard Deacon, in support of Ashe and others, produced a chart of the Gwynedd family tree, shown on the next page,⁶⁵ which apparently confirms the existence of Madoc.

Even with this evidence, however, a few puzzling aspects still remain. One aspect is that Madoc's exploits cannot be documented until after the time of Columbus, which is a most suspicious circumstance. Also, according to Robert Rea, subsequent investigation has supported the view of Thomas Stephens and proven that portions of the literary remains implying a Madocean voyage were nothing more than forgeries.⁶⁶

This leads to a second question: just how accurate was



the continuation of Caradoc's Historie of Cambria by Lloyd and Powel? As previously stated in this chapter, Caradoc made no mention of Madoc in his original manuscript, that it was Lloyd and then Powel that added the story of Madoc. According to John Baldwin, Madoc's story, as related in the old Welsh annals, was preserved in the abbeys of Conway and Strat Flur, and was used by Lloyd (and later Powel) in their continuation and translation of Caradoc's Historie.⁶⁷ Yet, mysteriously, no one else ever saw this manuscript story used by Lloyd and Powel.

Modern scholarship, according to David B. Quinn, attributed the elaboration of the Madoc voyages to Powel's one invention, possibly aided by his association with Richard Hakluyt, who adopted the story in the same year in

Original Writings.⁶⁸ Along a similar line, a great deal of evidence, the first of which appeared in Gentleman's Magazine in 1740, strongly suggested that the Madoc narrative was so conceived as to prove English rights to the continent of North America prior to that of the Spanish.⁶⁹

A third question that needs to be considered concerns the existence of the Welsh Indians. At one time or another, these Indians have been identified with the Nottoway, Modoc, Hopi, Padouca (Comanche), Pawnee, Kansas, Oto, and the Mandan tribes, to name only a few. Despite the fact that Richard Deacon believed that the failure to establish a connection between Welsh and any Indian tongue was due to the fact that the Welsh words were a "secret language" reserved for very special purposes, hence undiscoverable and ultimately lost among the surviving Mandans,⁷⁰ most evidence seems to point to the fact that "Welsh Indians" did not exist.

Thomas Stephens never believed in the existence of Welsh Indians and argued that all were "pretended facts."⁷¹ James Mooney, in his article "Welsh Indians," stated that a succession of writers over the last three hundred years ". . . have built up a tribe of 'Welsh Indians' on the flimsiest theories until the extension of linguistic investigation has left no resting place on the entire continent for this mythic people."⁷² Mooney concluded that:

It seems hardly necessary to state there is not a provable trace of Welsh, Gaelic, or any other European language in any native American language, excepting for a few words of recent introduction which have had no effect whatever on the general structure or vocabulary.⁷³

Lastly, are there any physical or other evidences that prove Madoc ever reached America? The ruins of DeSoto Falls, Fort Mountain, and the Old Stone Fort, as well as the six skeletons in "Welsh armor," have all been previously shown to be non-conclusive. Thomas Stephens observed that there is a lack of contemporary evidence, as no contemporary history in Wales mentions the Madoc journey or journeys.⁷⁴ The statement of Chief Oconastota, who is the only source that states Madoc landed at Mobile Bay, is based on hearsay evidence.⁷⁵ It may perhaps be said, though, that Alexander von Humbolt, one of the most critical minds of his age, thought the theory worthy of serious consideration, yet even he concluded that "the deepest obscurity still shrouds everything connected with the voyage of the Gaelic chief, Madoc."⁷⁶

Therefore, after extensive research and careful analysis and consideration of all the available evidence, one feels safe to conclude that the theory of the pre-Columbian discovery of America by the Welsh is not valid.

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¹Thomas Stephens, Literature of the Kymry (London: William Rees, 1849), p. 141.

²James A. Williamson, The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery Under Henry VII (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 201.

³George Peckham, A True Report of the Late Discoveries of the Newfound Landes (London, 1583).

⁴David B. Quinn, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, ed. George W. Brown (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), I, p. 678.

⁵Caradoc of Llancasfan, The Historie of Cambria, trans. Humphrey Lloyd, ed. David Powel (London, 1584).

⁶Zella Armstrong, Who Discovered America? The Amazing Story of Madoc (Chattanooga, Tennessee: Lookout Publishing Company, 1950), p. 10.

⁷Ibid., p. 228.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Justin Winsor (ed.), Narrative and Critical History of America (New York: AMS Press, 1967), I, p. 109.

¹⁰Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (Glasgow, Scotland: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904), VII, pp. 133-34.

¹¹Ibid., p. 135.

¹²Map showing purported routes of Madoc's voyages to America. Richard Deacon, Madoc and the Discovery of America (London: George Braziller, 1964), p. 101.

¹³Thomas Herbert, A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile Into Afrique, Asia, Indies (London, 1634), pp. 217-25.

- ¹⁴Frederick J. Pohl, Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 172.
- ¹⁵Quinn, Canadian Biography, I, p. 678.
- ¹⁶Sylvanus Urban, Gentleman's Magazine: An Historical Chronicle (London: Edward Cave, St. John's Gate, 1740), X, p. 104.
- ¹⁷Winsor, Critical History, I, p. 110.
- ¹⁸James Mooney, "Welsh Indians" in F. W. Hodge's Handbook of American Indians (New York: Pagent Books, Inc., 1960), II, p. 931.
- ¹⁹Bernard A. DeVoto, The Course of Empire (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), I, p. 72.
- ²⁰Robert R. Rea, "Madogwys Forever: The Present State of the Madoc Controversy," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XXX (1968), p. 9, citing The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke (1784), pp. 95-8.
- ²¹Armstrong, Who Discovered America?, p. 57.
- ²²Ibid., p. 90, citing Robert Druett, Filson Club Publications, No. 23 (1908).
- ²³Deacon, Madoc, p. 232.
- ²⁴Rea, Alabama Historical Quarterly, p. 9.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 11.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸David Williams, "John Evans's Strange Journey," American Historical Review, XLIV, No. 3 (April, 1949), Part II, pp. 508-09.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 514.
- ³⁰Ibid., pp. 518-21.
- ³¹J. B. Tyrrell (ed.), David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812 (Toronto, 1916).

- ³²Tyrrell, Explorations in Western America, pp. 525-26.
- ³³Ibid., p. 528.
- ³⁴Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 174.
- ³⁵DeVoto, Course of Empire, I, p. 471.
- ³⁶Samuel Eliot Morison, The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 86.
- ³⁷Rea, Alabama Historical Quarterly, p. 13.
- ³⁸Stephens, Literature of Kymry, p. 141.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 148.
- ⁴⁰DeVoto, Course of Empire, I, p. 568.
- ⁴¹Geoffrey Ashe, Land to the West: St. Brendan's Voyage to America (London: Collins, St. James's Place, 1962), p. 313.
- ⁴²George Catlin, Illustrations of the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians (London, 1876), pp. 65-207.
- ⁴³Ibid., II, pp. 259-61.
- ⁴⁴Deacon, Madoc, p. 235.
- ⁴⁵Thomas Stephens, Madoc: An Essay on the Discovery of America by Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1893).
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 214.
- ⁴⁷Quinn, Canadian Biography, I, p. 678.
- ⁴⁸Armstrong, Who Discovered America?, p. 18.
- ⁴⁹Ibid.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 124.
- ⁵¹Geoffrey Ashe, et al., The Quest for America (New York: Grederick Praeger, 1971), p. 51, citing The Mobile Register, November 11, 1953.

- ⁵²Deacon, Madoc, p. 34.
- ⁵³Ibid., pp. 43-4.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 172.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 133.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 143-44.
- ⁵⁷Armstrong, Who Discovered America?, p. 150.
- ⁵⁸Rea, Alabama Historical Quarterly, p. 16.
- ⁵⁹Deacon, Madoc, pp. 186-87.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 209.
- ⁶¹Rea, Alabama Historical Quarterly, pp. 6-17.
- ⁶²DeVoto, Course of Empire, I, p. 68.
- ⁶³Stephens, Madoc, p. 214.
- ⁶⁴Ashe, Land to the West, p. 312.
- ⁶⁵Deacon, Madoc, p. 23. Chart showing the family tree of the House of Gwynedd.
- ⁶⁶Rea, Alabama Historical Quarterly, p. 13.
- ⁶⁷John D. Baldwin, Ancient America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1871), p. 285.
- ⁶⁸Quinn, Canadian Biography, I, p. 678.
- ⁶⁹Urban, Gentleman's Magazine, p. 105. This may have well been the reason Richard Hakluyt included it in his voyages in the 16th century.
- ⁷⁰Deacon, Madoc, p. 234.
- ⁷¹Pohl, Atlantic Crossings, p. 174, citing Stephens's Essay on the Discovery of America by Madoc (1893).
- ⁷²Mooney, Handbook of Indians, II, p. 931.
- ⁷³Ibid., II, pp. 931-32.

⁷⁴Armstrong, *Who Discovered America?*, p. 148, citing Stephens's Essay on the Discovery of America by Madoc (1893).

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁶Alexander von Humboldt, Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe, trans. E. C. Otte, Bonn's ed. (London, 1849), II, pp. 608-10.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Several observations and conclusions can easily be drawn from this completed study. Only two of the six pre-Columbian theories discussed in this historiography have appeared to be valid: The Mongol and Norse. In each of these cases, physical evidences have been produced which have been verified by Carbon-14 datings. Validity in the other four cases (Phoenician, Chinese, Irish, and Welsh) has not been accepted for a variety of reasons: 1) the bardic tradition involves all four of these theories; it has been shown that poets and romantic historians have been known to enlarge the tales, adding somewhat absurd or otherwise dubious material to the original; 2) the Phoenician theory lacks the physical evidence to prove the claim, since the evidences produced, the 1872 stone tablet and Pennsylvania ironstones, have been shown to be inconclusive; 3) the Chinese and Irish theories both lack the physical evidences to prove their claims; and 4) the Welsh theory is suspect for lack of physical evidences, the suspicious facts that Madoc's exploits cannot be

documented until after the time of Columbus and that Caradoc's original manuscript of the Historie of Cambria did not mention the voyages of Madoc, and, finally, that evidence strongly suggests that the Madoc narrative was so conceived as to prove English rights to the continent of North America prior to that of the Spanish.

This study has made it apparent that no matter how authentic a theory may seem to be or prove to be to one person, invariably another person will find fault with it or will question it for one reason or another. But this is as it should be, for only by such criticism, based on supportive evidence after careful and thorough scholarly research, can the truth ever be discovered.

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