



The European Discovery of America The Northern Voyages

Samuel Eliot Morison

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A great historian and a superb prose stylist presents in these pages a comprehensive and brilliantly readable account of all known voyages across the North Atlantic to the New World prior to 1600, and the intrepid mariners, and the adventurers who sent them forth. The roll call includes all the great explorers: Leif Ericsson, John Cabot, Verrazzano, Gomez, Jacques Cartier, Martin Frobisher, John Davis, Sir Walter Raleigh and his kinsmen Grenville and Gilbert, and full gathering of their competitors. With flair and enthusiasm, based on ripe scholarship, Admiral Morison re-creates for the modern reader those who saw or claimed to have seen the shores of North America in the first 600 years after the Norsemen landed. He brings to their lives and perilous times a rare immediacy, making the drama and unpredictability of their voyages as significant in relation to the people of their times as the astronauts' journeys have been for our day. He does not neglect tales of lands that never were: Antilia and the Seven Cities, the glorious, fabulous Kingdoms of Norumbega and Saguenay, Hy-Brasil the Isle of the Blest; or of their alleged discoverers such as the Welsh Prince Madoc, the Zeno brothers of Venice, and two boisterous latecomers to legend, the Danish pirates Pining and Pothorst. With warmth and humor he distinguishes fact from figment, and imaginary explorers and their exploits from actual men and events. Admiral Morison opens a treasure bin of information about early fishing technique and sailing ships - from the Norse knarrs and Dutch cogs of the middle Ages to the full-rigged ships, elegant carvels, and dainty pinnaces of the Renaissance. The author himself has made transatlantic voyages under sail, and coasted the eastern shores of the U.S. and Canada. A simple plea for these vanished and gallant ships and mariners closes his story, the most comprehensive and readable to appear in three-quarters of a century.

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