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# ACRES OF PASSAGES

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Scientific Evidence



APRIL 19, 2020  
PROVINCIAL MEMBERSHIP GROUP

## The Templar Treasure

One of the abiding myths about our historical forebears is that they accumulated enormous wealth following some mysterious discovery at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Was it a secret connected to our Great Heavenly Captain such as the Spear of Destiny or the Shroud of Turin or was it something more ancient like the Ark of the Covenant; or maybe Dan Brown was right and it was the Holy Grail?



The Spear of Destiny at the Crucifixion

If it was one or more of these artifacts, the question remains where is the treasure now?

An American archaeologist Dr Albert Lin has been fascinated by these questions for many years and has been given permission to explore a Templar Fortress where it is thought their treasure may have been stored. His exploration was filmed by a team from National Geographic who made a documentary about his work.

Speaking on the programme, he said: *“These warrior monks are the stuff of legend, and so is their gold.”*

*During the Crusades the Knights Templar battled for God, gold and glory. Somewhere in the modern city of Acre lies their command centre, and possibly their treasure*

*It’s the stuff of childhood dreams. I’m here to find them.”*



Dr Albert Lin, the latter-day Indiana Jones, at Acre

The third Crusade which is famous for the tussle between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin the Moor included a famous siege at Acre and ended in its eventual fall in 1291 marking the end of the Templar Kingdoms in the Middle East.

Dr Lin has been granted access to previously unknown parts of the Fortress of Acre which so dominated the coast of the Mediterranean.

Acre, modern Akko, was the major port of the Kingdom of Jerusalem jutting into the sea with huge walls to protect the landward side. Its harbour was protected by a mole, on which stood the tower of Flies (1).



The Templar Hall at Acre which is open for public tours

In Acre the headquarters of the Templars and of the Hospitallers formed separate enclaves, each capable of individual defence (2).

The historian David Nicolle has observed;

*“But even though, after the third Crusade, the Kingdom of Jerusalem now consisted of no more than a narrow coastal strip from Acre to Beirut, it remained rich and the annual revenues were greater than the normal revenues of the King of England”*

The main passageway underneath the citadel was excavated in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and has since been opened to the public as a visitor attraction.



The excavated Templar Passageway

This passageway led from the forward tower to the Tower of Flies on the Mole and Dr Lin has dubbed this the Templar's

‘treasure tower’ and he believes that this secret passageway might have been used to move the Templar treasure for loading onto ships to be spirited away to greater safety.



Dr Lin and his team used LiDAR technology, and scanned the area of the site that was the key fortress for the Templars during the Third Crusade.

The technology uses lasers and detectors to scan the earth without disturbing any artefacts.



A tripod-based LiDAR Scanner

Scans revealed more secret passageways and a guardhouse hidden beneath the modern city.

As well as the passageways, the team of archaeologists discovered the remnants of the warriors' lavish fortress headquarters.

According to Dr Lin, the work has revealed how the knights moved gold to their fabled "Treasure Tower".

*"But the tower is buried beneath metres of dirt and rock and it is not clear if there will be a future excavation".*

Dr Lin added: *"The Templar's hidden tunnels snaked beneath the streets".*

*"They secretly transported gold to the Acre fortress' crowning glory, its Treasure Tower."*

The entrance to the newly discovered caverns and passageways is through an old doorway behind a shopping area.



The first descent is into the crypt of the Old Templar Church and a ladder takes the explorer a further 30 feet down a shaft into hidden passages exposed by Dr Lin's survey



Dr Lin examining Templar runes engraved onto the passageway walls

Dr Lin was filmed when first exploring these passages with the local archaeologist. Eleazar, and was heard to say *"so we're standing where real medieval Knights Templar hung out"*, after coming to terms with the 'fingernails down the blackboard' moment of American vernacular his sense of awe at where he found himself was palpable (3).



*Dr Lin and Eleazar explore the passages*

As the pair moved through the tunnels, Eleazar pointed out that three 25,000-gallon underground water tanks have been excavated so far and he believes there are many more awaiting discovery.



A column-head in one of Acre's newly discovered underground passageways

For us modern-day Templars there is an ancillary question to be considered. Is Dr Lin right when he says that he thinks the Templar treasure is still buried at Acre or

was it carried away from the Mole area just before Acre fell in 1291.

Tantalisingly for us, if it was taken from Acre, where did it go?

A clue to its mysterious location may lie in the final days of the Order in 1307. It is recorded that the Templars had a fleet of 18 ships based at La Rochelle and that this fleet left laden with knights and treasures just before the issue of the warrant for the arrest of Order (4).

This information is, however, based on a single testimony from Jean de Chalon who says that he “*heard people talking that Gerard de Villiers had put to sea with 18 galleys....and the whole treasury*” (5).

The destination of the fleet was reputed to be Scotland which may explain the legend of Rosslyn Chapel. Yet another legend suggests that the fleet headed for north

America and made landfall at Nova Scotia at a small island known as Oak Island. But these are stories for another day!

If you have access to Netflix, you may like to watch a series called 'Knightfall' which begins in Acre at its final fall and suggests that the treasure stored there was none other than the Holy Grail itself; an entertaining series but based upon known Templar facts!

*Brother knights, once more;*

**'To all Knights Templar wheresoever dispersed, over the face of earth or water'**

Yours in the Bonds of the Order

Provincial Second Constable

Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup> day of April in the year of our Heavenly Captain 2020

## Notes and References

- 1). The Routledge Companion to Medieval Warfare
- 2). Crusader castles in the Holy Land 1192-1302
- 3). National Geographic Documentary
- 4). The book; Holy Cross, Holy Grail
- 5) Testimony of Jean de Chalon which was noted at the time as 'hearsay'

