

Gavin Menzies Presentation

Library of Congress 16th May 2005

Opening

Thanks to those at the Library of Congress who have been so helpful.

Dr. Lee

Dr. Lu

Dr. Hébert

Anchi

Structure of the talk – in 4 parts

1. How the discoveries came about – an accident.
2. Evidence since '1421' was published
3. Evidence after the Television documentaries
4. My mistakes.

Logistics

1. Everyone's talks available on Gunnar Thompson's website. He will give further details.
2. List of memos on each chair.
3. These and further evidence available on website www.1421.tv
4. Maps and charts in Mumford Room for inspection

Part I - '1421 – A voyage of discovery'

In December 1990 Marcella, my wife and I decided to visit China to celebrate our silver wedding anniversary.

We arrived in The Forbidden City on a beautiful cold New Year's Eve to be greeted with a colourful celebration – white fireworks exploded in the pitch black sky; dragon dancers wandered in and out of clouds of purple smoke; clowns belched orange fire from their mouths and acrobats leapt over the heads of startled children. As we were leaving I asked our guide when the Forbidden City was inaugurated.

A: "On New Year's day 1421"

Q: "Why did the Emperor build this huge new city on the edge of Mongolia?"

A: "Because he wanted to move North."

Q: "Why?"

A: "Because he wanted to leave the South!"

On return to London I decided to find the answer myself. Apart from China it quickly became obvious that 1421 was a fascinating year in Europe. Just as the Forbidden City was being inaugurated the beautiful young French Princess, Katherine of Valois was being crowned Queen of England – part of Henry V's brilliantly conceived scheme to bring the Hundred Years' War to an end. In northern Europe in December 1421, the Hussites deployed the first tank armed with gunpowder cannon to defeat the Holy Roman Emperor at Kutna Hora. The Protestant secession had started. In the same month the Ottomans crossed the Dardanelles and surrounded Byzantium – the Byzantine Empire was in its death throes. Tamerlane had wreaked havoc on the Empire of Islam which effectively collapsed in 1421 – there were 5 Mamluk sultans within 12 months. The last of these, Barsbey, seized power in December 1421 and decided to make his fortune by seizing all international trade through Egypt – the spice route was cut just as the Silk Road was severed by the Ottomans.

Europeans could no longer obtain luxuries from the East. Henry the Navigator set up his base in Sagres to find another route around the Cape. The first overseas European colony, Madeira, was formally founded in 1421.

I spent 10 years from 1990 researching the events of this fascinating year 1421. My travels took me across the world to old seaports and along dusty trade routes through Asia. In late 1999 the book was ready. The publisher required a number of rewrites which were completed by early 2001. The manuscript was then sent to a number of historians to check accuracy.

One of these Professor Carol Urness asked if I was aware of a chart, which her university possessed published in 1424 by an Italian by the name of Zuane Pizzigano. The significance of this map was that it was drawn in 1421-23 and seemed to show Islands in the Caribbean – 70 years before Columbus set sail. The islands were instantly recognisable – Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe and les Saintes. My conclusion was this was the result of a secret Portuguese voyage. I informed the Portuguese Ambassador and he kindly introduced me to the keeper of the National

Archives in the Torre do Tombo, Lisbon. On a beautiful October day in 2001 I inspected the Archives and quickly learned that the Portuguese knew nothing of the Caribbean Islands nor of Pizzigano's Map, but that in 1428 they had brought back to Lisbon from Venice a map of the World which they claimed showed the whole world - including South Africa and the route to China. South America had the "Straits of Magellan", which was named "The Dragon's tail." So here was an extraordinary claim that the whole world appeared on maps before the European voyages of exploration started, 50 years before the Portuguese reached South Africa or Columbus set sail for the Americas.

The world maps were last seen in 1540. It seemed to me that had the Portuguese really possessed them, their Captains would have been issued with copies showing the way to the New World. So in October 2001 I started to research records of the early explorers – Columbus, Cabral, Dias, da Gama and Magellan. Before November was out I had come to the astonishing conclusion that each of these brave men had accepted they had maps showing their destinations before they set sail. This information overwhelmed my book which I had spent 10 years writing, so to my wife's horror, I threw it away, repaid my advance to the publisher and began all over again from scratch, 12 years after the quest had started. My literary agent asked to resign in protest. It appeared a sad time.

On the other hand it seemed to me incontrovertible that the great European explorers did have maps of the New World.

- Columbus – incipient mutiny quashed by showing map.
- Magellan – the same
- Cabral – map of Brazil / DA cunha
- Da Gama – map of Cape
- Captain Cook – maps of Australia

Here are the maps which they had. (lights dimmed)

Slide 1 – Pizzigano/Caribbean

2 – Atlantic winds and currents

3 – Cantino – North America

4 – Cantino – Africa with perfect longitudes

5 – Piri Reis – Patagonia and Antarctic

[5A – possibly later – Zheng He Antarctic]

[5B – possibly later – Kublai Khan Antarctic]

6 – Jean Rotz – Australia

Here therefore is what a Master Chart of the World should look like.

End of part I

Part II of talk

Transworld did a marvellous job. They are an author's dream – bold, imaginative, honourable, efficient, and a pleasure to work with. They restructured the book to make it readable. It was published in November 2002 in the United Kingdom and in January 2003 in the United States of America.

Transworld had taken a huge gamble – there was I, a nonentity, claiming to turn History on its head. Understandably historians were furious. We had blistering reviews in many of the broadsheet papers. By Christmas 2002 the book was only selling steadily. An important review was scheduled to be published in early January. We hoped this would revive our fortunes but it was savagely unpleasant. Crest-fallen I set off for America for the United States launch.

Books are like children – impervious to their parents' views. Readers, fortunately, seem equally dismissive of critics. After the last mauling, sales took off. '1421 –The Year China discovered the World' and the accompanying compact disc is now on sale in 115 countries and a copy is sold about every 40 seconds somewhere around the World.

The Master chart of the World

The publicity these sales engineered has introduced thousands of people who have become "friends" of our website. Amongst these is Dr. Gunnar Thompson whose research over a lifetime dwarfs mine. Gunnar drew my attention to the Master Chart of the Eastern Hemisphere. Before I show you this chart – here is what it should look like:

Slide 7 – What Master chart should look like

Slide 8 – Here it is. Albertin di Virga 1410-1415.

Explain – distances

- Portugal – Australia

- River Ob – Cape of Good Hope
- West Africa – Japan

Highlight

- Niger River Delta / Bight of Benin
- Rivers Ob and Lena
- St. Helena / Ascension
- Indian Ocean Islands

This chart which shows the whole Eastern Hemisphere with correct latitudes and longitudes, was published before the first European voyages of exploration started – before Henry the Navigator had set up his base at Sagres.

So what about the Western Hemisphere? Was there a map – as the Portuguese claimed – which showed the straits of Magellan – the Dragon's Tail before Magellan got there?

There was one, a small version of the 1507 Waldseemueller to be found in the Minneapolis Museum of Minnesota (James Ford Bell Library. Note – Christie's are auctioning a sister map on June 6th.) I decided to look once again at the Library of Congress version of the Waldseemueller.

Slide 9 – Waldseemueller – Library of Congress version

Slide 10 – Waldseemueller, latitudes and longitudes.

As may be seen Waldseemueller has claimed his own projection system to convert from a globe (shown on the James Ford Bell and Christies version) to a flat piece of paper. I went down each coast of the Americas selecting places 1000 miles apart (A, B, C, etc. on slide) noting Waldseemueller's latitudes and longitudes at each place A, B, C, etc. Then I reversed this process transposing his latitudes and longitudes from a flat piece of paper to a globe. Here is the result.

Slide 11 – Waldseemueller (LOC version) showing Western Hemisphere.

Here is the Western Hemisphere instantly recognisable. South America has the correct shape, landmass and position relative to North America and Africa. The Pacific is shown 2 decades before Balboa 'discovered' it and the Straits of Magellan/

Dragon's tail a decade before Magellan got there. Magellan told the truth that he had seen the straits on a map in the king of Portugal's Library before he set sail, but he had not told the complete truth for he had secreted a copy of this map on his person. He produced it to the King of Lmasara after he has crossed the Pacific.

Slide 12

So here are the maps of the East and West hemispheres before the European voyages of exploration started. 40 million square miles of ocean with thousands upon thousands of islands published before European voyages of exploration to these places had started.

Publication of these maps on our website in the summer of 2004 has caused a seismic change in historians' attitudes to my theory. Since September 2004 I have not received a single serious objection – only cranks remain. '1421' is now taught in American, British and Chinese schools. I am indebted to the thousands upon thousands of readers and viewers to my website who have made this possible by correcting my many mistakes and bringing so much new evidence.

Concurrently with the publication of the book we set up a website www.1421.tv. This has proved hugely valuable. More than 1000 people a day visit the website and we have received more than 100,000 emails and letters. A constant stream of new evidence pours in hour by hour, many times I have awoken in the night and been unable to get back to sleep until reading what has arrived in the past couple of hours. The 3 years have seemed like being a submarine Captain once more – snatches of sleep now and then!

The new evidence quickly threw up mistakes in my book. Of these far and away the biggest was my caution and conservatism. I should have been far bolder and more far-reaching. Rather than 100 great ships setting sail, there were well over 1000. More than 800 reached Calicut alone. The scale of the losses was even more horrific; hundreds were lost in 1430 set alight by a comet which hit them south of New Zealand. I underestimated the legacy which Admiral Zheng He inherited from his predecessors – Kublai Khan's fleets sailed the world in 1269. Some of his men settled in The Azores and their descendants remain to this day. Europe was omitted in the book: my main reason being to claim Chinese fleets sailed up the English Channel in 1421 (which they did) would have – at that stage – branded me as a crank. The revised edition of the book will describe Zheng He's representatives

meeting Florentines and handing over charts, which the Florentines passed over to Columbus. The revised edition will also spell out why European History of the era 1400 – 1492 is one long fairy story. The Chinese had by 1421 settled the entire World.

Use of the website

We have been learning as we go along. The website is an extremely important research tool with a wide range of application apart from history. It may be of interest to take one example that of the havoc wreaked on the Chinese fleets by a comet and tsunami in 1430.

A retired Marine Engineer Cedric Bell read my book and decided to carry out his own private research on New Zealand South Island. He found 44 wrecked junks many buried deep under the sand or far inland. We decided with Cedric's agreement, to check out his finds. We published his findings on our website www.1421.tv. This resulted in a flood of suggestions – satellite photography; ground penetrating radar; electro magnetic resistivity and sonic and magnetic variation tests. Having carried these out we asked for advice on carbon dating of mortar, wood, slag refined metal, and human bones.

All of these tests corroborated Cedric Bell's research beyond any possible doubt. After this confirmation, Cedric returned to New Zealand for a more detailed inspection of a group of wrecks at Moeraki. He found several huge ships had been impaled in cliffs upside down, some a hundred feet above sea level. Even more bizarre some were burned to pieces. We advertised the finds once more on the website. Many viewers suggested a tsunami was responsible; New Zealand experts informed us that New Zealand sits on a fault line with frequent volcanic eruptions, which could have set off a tsunami. A small minority of viewers concluded such tsunamis could not themselves be the cause of devastating fires, which must have overcome the junks whilst at sea – a meteor or comet was more likely.

Back to the website. Professor Ted Bryant of Wollongong University contacted us: He is the author of "Tsunami: The underrated hazard". In this book he sets out the evidence that a tsunami devastated New Zealand South Island between 1410 and 1480. At the same time, fires wiped out many of New Zealand's forests. The source of the Tsunami and fires was a comet which both the Maoris in New Zealand and the

Aborigines of Australia saw “in the dreamtime”, that is, long before Europeans arrived.

Back to the website again – we were told Chinese astronomers had reported a very large blue comet visible for 26 days in June 1430. American astronomers also reported the Mayans had seen this comet in the 1430's.

The penultimate piece of the jigsaw was the research of the Lamont Doherty University team who found - quite independently of our research – that a huge comet had impacted south of New Zealand north of Auckland Island in position 48.3°S, 166.4°E. It had blasted a crater 20 kilometres across in the ocean bed and caused waves over 700 foot high when they reached New Zealand and 400 foot high in Southeast Australia. Their current best estimate of the date (which is being refined) is 1430-1443. You can see photos of the wrecked junks on the walls here and if you wish order a memorandum describing the damage.

The final piece of this jigsaw is to see what the damage this mega tsunami caused – whether for example it wiped out civilisations on the Pacific coast of South America.

Literally thousands of people have given us the benefit of their expertise and time to advise and teach us. We have 13,000 friends on our website and hope to greatly expand these.

It seems to us the website could revolutionise the study of History because people of many different disciplines can contribute.

Part IV

The final part of my talk is to highlight my mistakes and thank those who will be correcting them.

I was too cautious to claim Zheng He's fleets had visited Europe. Mr. Tai Peng Wang has found they did indeed sail via the Red Sea / Nile Canal into the Mediterranean in 1408 (Ming Shih). In doing so they were following in the wake of Kublai Khan's fleet who visited Barcelona in 1269 (Carles Camp research). Zheng He's representatives also visited Florence in 1432 (Tai Peng Wang) where they briefed the famous Italian mathematician Paolo Toscanelli. Toscanelli learned form

Zheng He the secrets of declination of the Sun and how to determine latitude – invaluable to late Portuguese navigators (Regiomontanus); he acquired Torqueta from Zheng He which he passed on to Vespucci which enabled him to calculate longitude; and maps of the Americas which Toscanelli passed on to Christopher Columbus.

Zheng He's fleets sailed on to North Europe ('Franca' in Ming Shi) and in my opinion berthed at The Hague where they passed on the secrets of moveable block printing to Laurens Zanzoon Coster and perspective to Jan Van Eyck (Van Eyck's camera obscura: David Hockney research). Many of these extremely important intellectual ideas will be discussed by those far more knowledgeable and gifted than I – Professor Cribbs in particular will talk about longitude and Dr. Gunnar Thompson on Kublai Khan's contribution.

Another major mistake was my belief that Zheng He's records had been destroyed – Mr. Lam will show you they were not. They disclose Zheng He's fleets did indeed reach the Americas, Australia and New Zealand. I seriously underestimated the importance of early Chinese records, which would have been available to Zheng He. This will be corrected by Charlotte Harris Rees, who will describe to you the collection of her father's maps, showing Chinese fleets have been sailing to and from the Americas and Australia for the past 4,000 years. Recent carbon dating of junk wood found beneath 40 foot of sand at Warrnambool supports these maps. Robin Lind will provide evidence of early European voyages to the Arctic – clearly these brave explorers relied on earlier maps, something I skated over in my book.

Another major omission concerns DNA. Dr. Tony Frudakis CEO and CSO of DNA Print Genomics will talk about the Asian admixture found in the DNA of indigenous American peoples.

Finally Paul Chiasson will inform you of his momentous discovery of Zheng He's base on the Atlantic Seaboard of North America. I wish to nail my colours to Paul's mast in full support of his historic achievement.

In conclusion, my thanks to the Library of Congress in allowing these controversial and perhaps unpopular views to be put forward. Free speech lives on!

God bless America.