

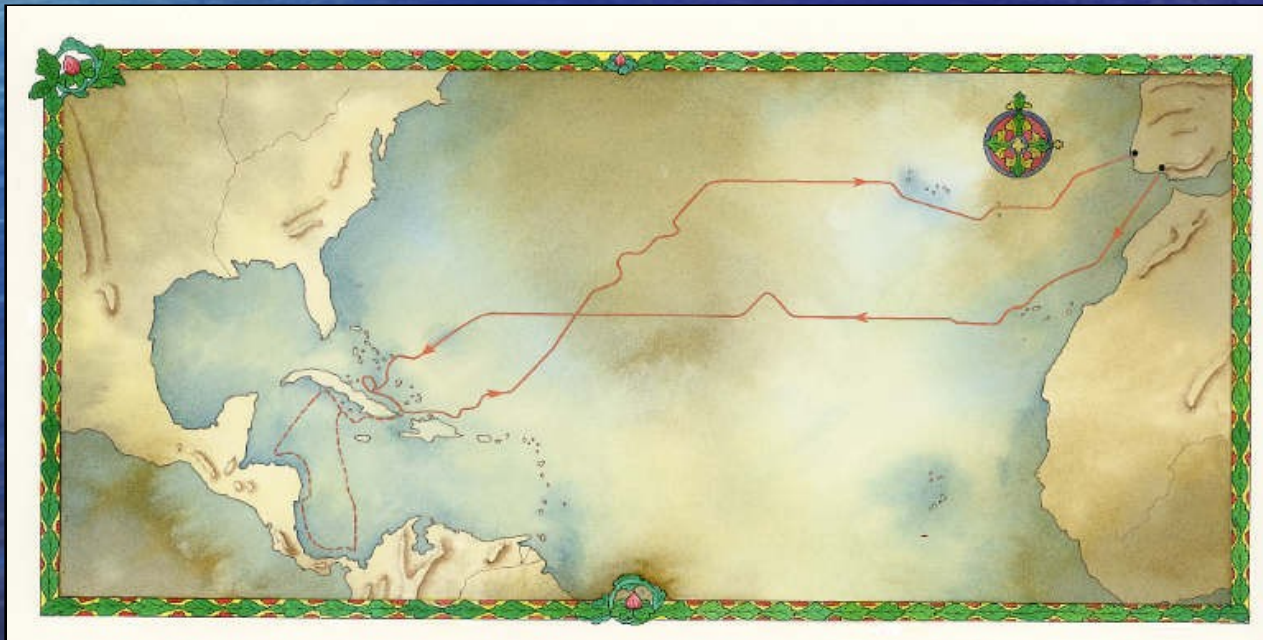


# Discovering America

Who Was Really There First?



- Columbus went to Spain and asked King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to support him. They agreed.
- Columbus set sail for west from Spain and landed in the Caribbean.



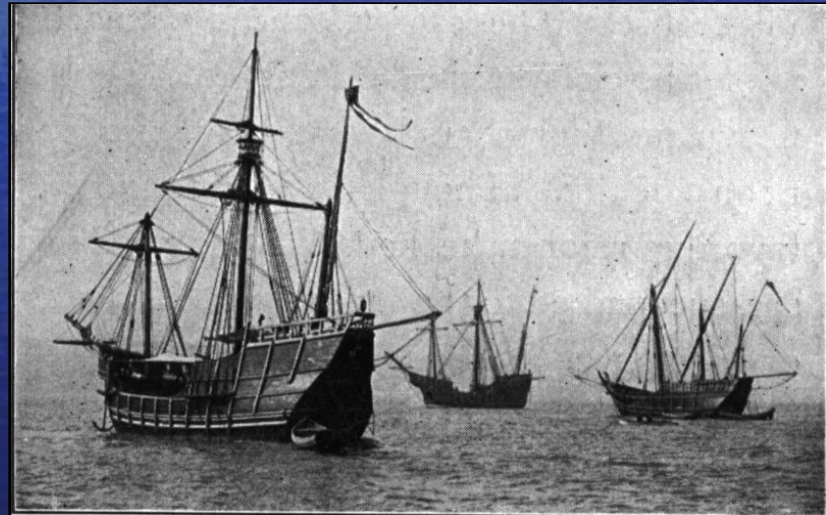
- Columbus's crew explored part of the Bahamas, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.



- Columbus thought he had reached the far eastern part of Asia known as the Indies, so he called the natives, "Indians."



- Most history books credit Columbus as the first man to reach the Americas.



**Santa  
Maria**

**Nina**

**Pinta**

- But in his log book, Columbus makes the following statement:

“I believe it to be the island of Cipango, of which such wonders are told, and which lies in this region on the globes and the maps of the world which I have seen...”

- If Columbus had a detailed map of the New World, where did he get it? How did the mapmakers know the area if they hadn't been there and seen it first?

# The Vikings:

- The Vikings were people from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. They invaded Europe and settled in new lands including Iceland and Greenland.
- The Vikings claim to have discovered the New World before Columbus.



- Around 986, Viking Bjarni Herjolfsson was on a journey from Iceland to Greenland. He claims that a violent storm pushed his boat to the shores of North America. But he did not stay to explore the area.



- Then, around 1000 AD, a Viking navigator, Leif Eriksson, claims to have explored the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland. Because he saw so many grapes, he decided to call it Vinland.



- In 1957, a Vinland map was discovered that was created in the 1400s. It seemed to prove that the Vikings were in the Americas at least 500 years before Columbus.



- But as scholars have examined the map, they aren't 100% sure it is authentic.
  - Carbon dating of the paper shows that it is from medieval times which is consistent with the claim.
  - But the ink used to draw the map uses a chemical that wasn't commonly used before the 1920s, though there are other real historical documents that use small amounts of it.

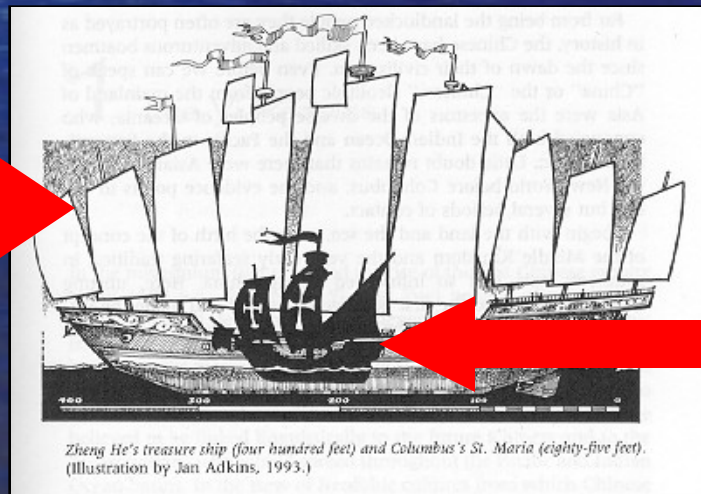


# The Chinese:

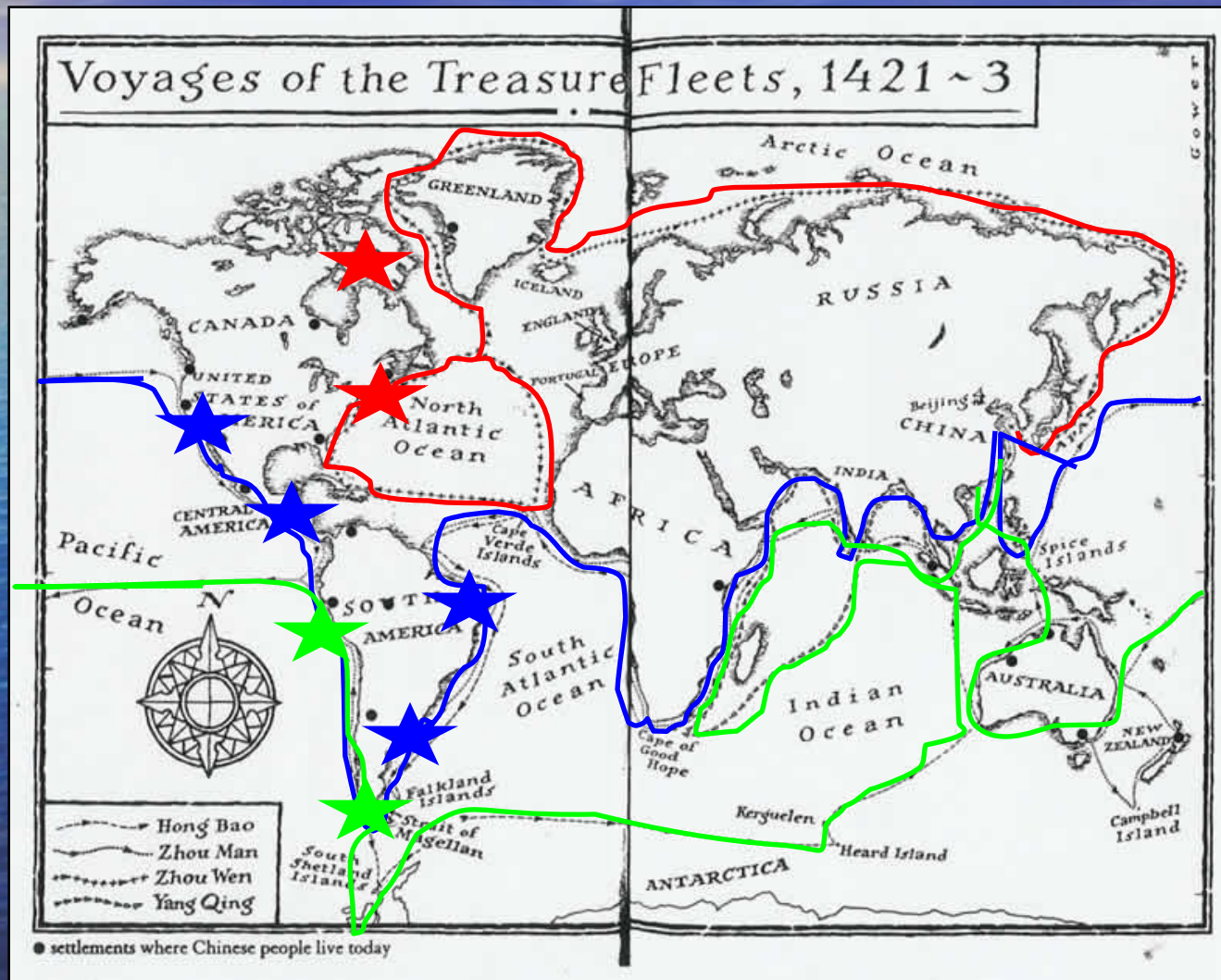
- A man named Gavin Menzies believes that the Chinese were the first to land in the Americas and to circumnavigate the globe.



- From 1405 to 1433, the Chinese led many expeditions to other countries under a man named Zheng He, their chief explorer.
- Their boats were 600 feet long and very high-tech for the day. They even grew gardens on their boats!



- According to Menzies, Zheng He made these voyages:



- Menzies got his ideas from the following evidence:
  - The remains of some of the people of the New World from that time have Chinese DNA.
  - Animals and plants native to either the New World or China have been found in the other land.
  - Menzies believes he has found the remains of Chinese maps that show they explored that portion of the world.





- This map claims that it is a copy of a map drawn in 1418 and it clearly shows the New World.



- But written Chinese history will never tell us if they did in fact discover the New World first.
- All the records were destroyed when a new emperor came to power.
- China stopped building their amazing ships and stopped exploring after Zheng He.

