

styles were as much products of personality and upbringing as of political circumstances and national differences.

Although Churchill exerted less immediate power over people's lives, the effect was arguably more genuine and longer lasting than that of Hitler on Germans' lives—which is why he was easily voted the top "Great Briton" in 2002's nationwide BBC poll and will probably top such polls for decades to come. Churchill is probably the only person whom both Tories and the left can unite in supporting—and he is also a symbol, for many Britons, of the last gasp of Great Britain, before mass immigration and socialism began to work their evil magic. As the *Times* put it in an editorial in 1990, "The iconography of 1940 cannot be very far from those with Britain on their mind."

It may be significant, however, that, when German television recently decided to put on a German equivalent of "Great Britons," the producers felt they had to exclude Hitler from the list of possible nominees. This may have been a case of baseless blind panic on the part of television executives, but it is possibly also a worrying confirmation of John Lukacs's fears. Perhaps, after all, charisma may be as long-lasting as inspiration given the right—or wrong—circumstances. Human nature has not changed much since 1945, and we have certainly not seen the last of shrewd political operators who know how to press the right emotional buttons at crucial moments and are willing to deliver whole nations into the hands of death and disaster simply in order to realize some cranky fantasy or to gratify their own vanity.

Nor will such operators ever find it difficult to find followers. As Roberts notes,

In an age that considers itself sophisticated and correspondingly cynical, in times of peril, inspired leadership still relies to a large extent on the suspension of disbelief. The stock of human emotions that the leaders are appealing to are [sic] limited and remarkably consistent and it can be plundered and plagiarised . . . but above all learned [he adds, encouragingly].

Hitler & Churchill may therefore prove itself to be not just a distinctive contribution to World War II scholarship but an antibiotic against ideological infection, a valuable vaccination against future Führers.

... plus c'est la même chose

by H.A. Scott Trask

1421: The Year the Chinese Discovered America

by Gavin Menzies
New York: HarperCollins;
507 pp., \$27.95

Gavin Menzies, a retired British naval officer and submarine commander, has advanced a startling thesis. He believes that, in 1421-23, a large Chinese fleet circumnavigated the world and skirted the continents of Africa, South America, Antarctica, and North America. Before you dismiss his contention as the latest multicultural myth, like claiming black Africa as the source of Greek civilization, realize that Menzies has amassed a formidable array of evidence that demonstrates, at the very least, that the early European explorers had sources of geographic information of parts of the world yet to be explored, of which previous historians have not been aware.

Consider the 1424 map of the Atlantic drawn by Venetian cartographer Zuane Pizzigano. The map includes four islands located in the far western Atlantic. Menzies believes the largest, Antilia (medieval Portuguese for "island on the opposite side"), is Puerto Rico and the second largest, Satanazes ("Satan's island"), is Guadeloupe. Antilia is shaped like Puerto Rico, and includes all the latter's major bays. In addition, Pizzigano wrote *con* and *ymana* on his map ("volcano erupts here"). Menzies found that the volcanoes on Guadeloupe had erupted twice between 1400 and 1440, but had been dormant for the previous 100 and the next 250 years. Even the island's name suggested that some explorer had visited, for, as Columbus found 70 years later, the island contained vicious cannibals who attacked strangers on sight. The Pizzigano chart thus offers evidence that the Portuguese had somehow acquired detailed knowledge of two Caribbean islands in 1424.

There is more.

The Andrea Bianco chart of 1436 shows the Sargasso Sea, and its 1448 successor features the northeast coast of Brazil, 52

years before Pedro Cabral's expedition reached that land. Toscanelli's 1474 map of the world, which Columbus took with him in 1492, also shows Antilia. Cristobal Soligo's 1489 chart reveals the western end of Hispaniola, the Virgin Islands, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Barbados, Trinidad, and the north coast of Venezuela. The 1502 Cantino world chart shows what appears to be the coast of New England. Bartolomeu Dias knew of the existence of the Cape of Good Hope long before he rounded it in 1488, for the cape appears clearly on the Frau Mauro planisphere of 1459. This cartographer appended notes explaining that a Chinese ship rounded the cape in 1420, followed the prevailing winds and currents to the Cape Verde Islands (Isole Verde), and circled the South Atlantic before returning. Apparently, Ferdinand Magellan knew of the existence of the strait that bears his name *before* he set sail from Spain. He reassured his frightened sailors that he had inspected a chart in Portugal showing the strait through which they were about to sail. The Piri Reis map of 1513 clearly shows Patagonia, the strait, the Andes Mountains, the northern tip of Antarctica, the Falkland Islands, and South Georgia, seven years before Magellan would sail into those waters.

Menzies believes the Portuguese had acquired a map of the world in 1428 that featured parts of all six continents, the Cape of Good Hope, the Strait of Magellan, and the Caribbean. Although the map is lost, Menzies believes its existence can be demonstrated by textual, archival, and cartographic evidence. He quotes Portuguese historian Antonia Galvao (who died in 1557) as claiming that Dom Pedro, the brother of the king of Portugal (Prince Henry the Navigator), while in Venice in 1428, had acquired a

map of the world, which had all the parts of the world and earth described. The Streight of Magelan was called in it the dragon's taile; the Cape of Boa Esperanca, the forefront of Afrike and so forth of other places: by which Map Dom Henry the King's third sonne was much helped and furthered in his Discoveries.

He further explained, "It appeareth that in ancient times there was as much, or more discovered than now there is."

Menzies argues that Dom Pedro obtained this world map from Niccolo da

Conti, a Venetian merchant who had converted to Islam, traded in India, and was living in Alexandria. Upon learning that Conti had traveled through heretofore unknown parts of the world, Pedro, who had been sent by his brother on an intelligence mission to gather geographical knowledge and maps of possible routes to the Orient, contacted him and offered him a deal. If he would provide the Portuguese with information and charts based on his travels, Pedro would use his brother's influence with the Catholic hierarchy to gain for him absolution for his Islamic conversion. Conti agreed, and he returned to Rome, where he was debriefed by Dom Pedro. For obvious reasons, the Portuguese kept the map a state secret, revealing it only to a handful of officials, cartographers, and explorers. The Portuguese now knew there were two sea routes to the East Indies. Believing it was the shorter route, they chose to explore the one around the tip of Africa.

Menzies believes the world map was drawn from knowledge Conti gained while sailing with a Chinese fleet around the world just seven years before. In 1421, the Chinese emperor Zhu Di launched an enormous expedition led by over 100 large treasure ships (or junks) and hundreds of supporting craft, whose task was to sail the world's oceans, map the continents, establish trade with foreign peoples, and perfect their already advanced

knowledge of astronavigation and mathematical geography. Menzies believes these oceangoing vessels followed the prevailing winds and currents to India, down the east coast of Africa, north to the Cape Verde Islands, then separated with the currents. One fleet, led by Admiral Zhou Wen, sailed north to the Caribbean, with the Gulf Stream along the east coast of North America to Greenland, continued along the north coast of Siberia, and returned to China through the Bering Strait. The other fleet sailed south along the east coast of South America, went through the strait, and separated again, one fleet sailing south through the South Shetlands to Antarctica, then east to South Georgia, and along the 40th parallel to western Australia, before turning north for home. The third fleet sailed north along the west coast of South America to Ecuador and across the central Pacific to Australia, New Zealand, and the Spice Islands. It then followed the North Pacific current to North America, made landfall on Vancouver Island, and sailed south along the coast to Central America before turning west for home. Menzies believes most of the junks wrecked on rocky coasts, submerged coral reefs, and treacherous shoals, leaving thousands of Chinese stranded at different points and a plethora of physical evidence (archeological, botanical, and zoological).

While the fleet was at sea, a new emperor, who was hostile to overseas exploration, colonization, and trade, ascended the throne. When the surviving ships returned, he halted all future voyages, banned overseas travel and trade, and ordered all maps and written records of the expedition destroyed.

Menzies has amassed sufficient plausible evidence to deserve a point-by-point refutation from those who reject his claim. Such a refutation would still leave open the question of how the Portuguese obtained so much geographical information about places that neither they nor other Europeans of the time had visited. However, whether the Chinese fleet made these voyages does not matter very much in the end. If made, their "discoveries" were ephemeral and, at most, encouraged the European voyages. The Portuguese, bent on finding a sea route to Asia, would have groped their way around Africa even without advanced knowledge, and some naval power would have ventured west in search of Asia. The Europeans were restless, inquisitive, and inventive, and the lack of a world map would

not have stopped them. Furthermore, their discoveries enlarged the world, because they followed them with trading outposts, colonies, and continuing exploration, thus incorporating far-flung lands and seas into the intellectual and commercial radius of the western world. The Chinese discoveries were forgotten and left to be rediscovered almost 600 years later.

H.A. Scott Trask has just completed his biography of Condy Raguet and is now writing a short volume on William Graham Sumner before returning to his study of the Northern peace movement during the War Between the States.

In a Strange Land

by Fr. Michael P. Orsi

Catholicism and American Freedom: A History

by John T. McGreevey
New York: W.W. Norton & Co.;
295 pp., \$26.95



There will always be tension between America's experiment with democracy and hierarchically structured Roman Catholicism, because the two proclaim different concepts of freedom. While the former is grounded in the individualism of Protestantism and, more recently, of secularism, the latter regards true freedom as being circumscribed by claims imposed by considerations of the common good and by natural and supernatural law. In *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*, John T. McGreevey, the John A. O'Brien Associate Professor of History at Notre Dame, sketches the main events, ideas, and characters that have shaped American Catholicism since the 1840's. His thesis is grounded in the triangular tension among the local Catholic Church, wary authorities in Rome, and the civil and cultural ethos of the country. In this light, McGreevey discusses such key issues as schooling, slavery, social justice, sexual morality, and religious freedom. While his analysis of these matters will enrich the historian and theologian, it is the cultural anthropologist who will most benefit from the insight McGreevey brings to the inter-Church and

LIBERAL ARTS

"METROSEXUAL" BLUES

"He has been marginalised by the women's movement, portrayed as a useless plonker in television sitcoms and told by scientists that his Y-chromosome is in decline. Now the modern British male is about to be fleeced as advertisers capitalise on his low self-esteem and target him with products to 're-empower' him.

"Marian Salzman said her research . . . showed that men had been neutered — not just by feminism and women in the workplace, but by the political events of the past three years. September 11, the Iraq war and Private Jessica Lynch's usurping of the traditional male battlefield bravado had blurred their sense of self."

— from "Neutered modern man to be offered back his missing pride in exchange for his wallet"
by Angelique Chrisafis,
the Guardian (June 30)