

## CHAPTER BY CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

# **The Ancient Map Code**

Mystery of Chinese Global Exploration before Columbus

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## Overview

“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof.”

This exciting new book will release startling evidence – the clearly visible outline of a world map dating from 1093 that shows both the Americas and Oceania. This riveting and fast-paced history re-examines medieval maps, archeological findings and time-honored Chinese classics to provide a compelling case for the mapping of the world long before Columbus, Magellan and Cook.

The book provides a new interpretation of the early voyages of Chinese explorers and also untangles profound mysteries: What was the motivating force behind Chinese world exploration? How did they manage to succeed when it took so many so much longer? Why were their findings forgotten?

The book is intended for the general public. It is a page-turner that manages to take joy in descriptions of the past. The new ideas proposed and strong evidence presented aim to inspire lively debate and further study, as well as encourage cartographic and scientific awareness and understanding, which may prompt historians to rewrite world history on a grand scale.

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**Part One: Mystery of Medieval Maps**

## Chapter 1 An Intriguing World Map from 1418

In 2001, I stumbled upon an eighteenth century Chinese map claiming to incorporate information from a 1418 world map which showed the whole world with remarkable accuracy. The huge disparities between the notations on this map and generally accepted history aroused my curiosity, leading me to investigate the mysteries surrounding the map. The extensive researches not only authenticated the map, but also drove me to discover the untold historical secrets.

## Chapter 2 An “Obsolete and Unreliable Source” for Medieval European Maps

In the early twentieth century, several world maps made by Europeans and Arabs in medieval times were rediscovered. These medieval maps not only surprise to scholars in the cartographic community, but also brought about confusion and annoyance. The maps hint that before the Age of Discovery, someone had already carried out a fairly complete survey of the world. What is more, the result is amazingly accurate. Working on the copy of 1418 world map, I strongly felt the puzzles of the Western medieval maps had concealed the historical truth and merit behind these unusual phenomena, waiting to be unravelled.

## Chapter 3 Who Put North at the Top of the Map?

Whenever I examine maps, I almost always find that north is at the top. For a long time I wondered who devised this convention, when it happened and why not put east, west, or south at the top. This chapter reveals that in the medieval times people determined the map orientation based on their religious belief, and before thirteenth century only the Taoists in China put the north at the top of map. How, then, did the whole world eventually end up with the northern orientation? This question prompted me to dig even deeper.

**Part Two: China’s Legacy**

## Chapter 4 A 1093 World Map Showing America

The breakthrough came when I discovered the clearly visible outline of a world map in

a tomb built in 1093 in China. America and Australia were depicted on this map, which provides strong, tangible proof that the Americas and Australia were mapped four hundred years before Columbus and six hundred years before Captain Cook. Further study reveals that this map sheds more light on the tangle of mysteries: why Columbus mistook America for the Indies and referred to people there as “Indian,” and why several European medieval maps display South America as a giant peninsula in southeast Asia.

## Chapter 5 Transatlantic Travel in the Twelfth Century

The 1093 world map seems to suggest that the exploration of the Americas by ancient Chinese navigators could be recorded in contemporary Chinese books. Following this clue, I discovered several references in Chinese classics which reveal that in the tenth century, Chinese traders had already explored both maritime and surface routes leading to South East Asia, North Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and East Africa. In the twelfth century, an international trading network had been established by Chinese, Muslim and Byzantine traders, covering many seas and oceans. There are also clues to suggest that by the twelfth century medieval navigators had trading sea-routes across the Atlantic Ocean and had started trading with people in the South America.

## Chapter 6 Ancient Chinese Map Projection

The 1093 world map also indicated that ancient Chinese cartographers had a good grasp of map projection. This led me to shift the research into map projection, and I was amazed to discover that the ancient Chinese map projection originated in wizardry, and Daoism motivated the ancient Chinese to map the whole world. The Taoists believed that the contours of landmass and islands were in fact the characters of the deities in heaven. Ancient Chinese cartographers were convinced that the closer they drew the geographical feature of the earth to reality, the better they could grasp deities’ intentions and communicate with heaven. More than 1,800 years ago, Chinese sages had already started research into map projection; in the third century A.D, a Chinese cartographer invented the trapezoid projection, and a world map dating from the twelfth century shows the ancient Chinese map projection.

## Chapter 7 The Chinese Inventor of the Bi-Hemispherical World Map

Ancient Chinese cartographers not only created map projection, but invented the bi-hemispherical world map as well. This chapter presents a discovery suggesting that the bi-hemispherical map was first designed by a Chinese cartographer in the fourteenth century. This discovery discredits the orthodox opinion proposing that the bi-hemispherical world map first emerged in Europe during the early sixteenth century.

## Chapter 8 The Secret Mission of Zheng He’s Voyages

For a long time, the motivation of Zheng He's large-scale voyages in the early fifteenth century was an inexplicable mystery. Even though the original official documents concerning the voyages were destroyed or lost, there are clues hidden in the historical records suggesting that Zheng He was dispatched by the emperor as a religious messenger to worship the different deities around the world.

## Chapter 9 Mapping World and Scientific Civilization

This chapter examines Chinese and Western science and technology development in medieval times, and demonstrates that only Chinese had the technology and capability to map the whole world at that time. The analyses provide the solution to the mysteries surrounding the medieval world maps produced by Western cartographers; namely, that their source came from China.

## Part Three: Connections between East and West

### Chapter 10 Heritage of Ancient East-West Exchange – the Marco Polo World Maps

Marco Polo said to his friends on his deathbed: "I have only told the half of what I saw." The other half could have been the Americas. In 1933, an American naturalized citizen originating in Italy brought several charts to the Library of the Congress in Washington. These documents, showing a part of Alaska, were passed down from Marco Polo. The Chinese characters on the charts reveal that Marco Polo returned from China to Europe in 1295 with the information regarding the existence of North America.

### Chapter 11 Chinese Elements in Ancient Western Maps

"Ptolemaic Maps" and the Vinland, De Virga, Piri Reis maps, along with several other world maps charted by medieval European cartographers collectively cover the whole world, including the Americas and Antarctica. Each of these medieval maps conceals the different fingerprints of ancient Chinese, which indicates that the geographic information showed on these maps originated in China.

### Chapter 12 Forgotten History Concealed in the Portolan Charts

The portolan charts are spoken highly of in the field of cartographic history; they are also considered eccentric unorthodox historical masterpieces. The odd questions posed by portolan charts have been baffled cartographic historians for more than a century. This chapter examines clues suggesting the Chinese origins of portolan charts, and provides the explanation to the question left open in Chapter 3: Why did cartographers all over the world come to adopt northward orientation.

## Chapter 13 The Jesuits and Traditional Chinese Cartography

After studying ancient Chinese cartography, a question drew my attention: Why did the Chinese forget the cartographic accomplishment of their predecessors and come to believe that Jesuits introduced geographic and cartographic knowledge into China? Research into the history convinced me that narratives created by several writers misled historians.

## **Part Four: History as a Mirror**

## Chapter 14 Why China Failed to Develop after the Fifteenth Century

This chapter builds on Needham's question: Why did ancient Chinese technology fail to develop after the fifteenth century? Why did the industrial revolution take off in Europe and not China? Further research suggests an unexpected answer to Needham's question: Confucianism, which has been admired by Chinese for centuries, was a handicap to the progress of ancient Chinese technology.

## Chapter 15 History as a Mirror

This book ends with a suggestion for China: Learn a lesson from history, and open up your social mindset.