

***Book Review of “The Last Journey of The San Bao Eunuch Admiral Zheng He”
authored by Dr. Sheng-Wei Wang, published by Proverse Hong Kong in
November 2019***

书评人 梁建邦教授 书名《三宝太监海军上将郑和
的最后一次旅程》 作者 王胜炜博士
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I was first immersed in Chinese classics during my early school years before embarking on a process of Westernized education and professional career. It gives me great pleasure in reviewing Dr. Wang’s latest painstaking “Sherlock Holmes” research to ascertain what might actually have happened to Admiral Zheng He’s sixth and seventh voyages to support Gavin Menzies’ claim in his seminal work “1421: The Year China Discovered the World” published in 2002.

我还未接受西化教育和开始我的职业生涯之前，曾于求学初期，沉浸于中国古典文学中，因此我非常高兴，能够有机会评阅王博士最新的透彻研究，它用类似“福尔摩斯”侦探的方式，探讨三保太监海军上将郑和的舰队在第六次和第七次航行时，可能遭遇的实际经历，并以此验证作家加文·孟席斯（Gavin Menzies）在他 2002 年出版的开创性著作《1421 年：中国发现世界》中所做出的声称。

Before this groundbreaking book, Dr. Wang already launched a Chinese-language book on 1 August, 2015 – 《郑和发现美洲之新解》 or *New Evidence for Zheng He’s Exploration of the Americas* – in collaboration with Mark Nickless and Laurie Bonner-Nickless.

在出版《三宝太监海军上将郑和的最后一次旅程》这本开创性的著作之前，王博士已经与马克·尼克莱斯（Mark Nickless）和劳丽·邦纳·尼克莱斯（Laurie Bonner-Nickless）合作，于 2015 年 8 月 1 日发行了一本中文著作《郑和发现美洲之新解》。

Dr. Wang has waded through a thicket of prominent ancient records in the original Chinese language, including official histories of the Ming Dynasty and antique Chinese maps bearing on the period in question. Having examined patterns of

oceanographic currents, meteorological data, flora and fauna characteristics, cultural anthropology, and latest not-yet-published archaeological finds, she has found amazingly detailed clues of timelines and locational indications in the epic historical work of Luo Maodeng – 《三宝太监西洋记》 or *An Account of the Western World Voyage of the San Bao Eunuch* – published in 1597, consisting of 100 chapters and over 750,000 words.

王博士涉猎了大量中文原文古籍，其中包括明朝的官方历史和与该时期有关的中国古代地图。在考察了海洋环流模式、气象数据、动植物特征、文化人类学以及最新的、尚未发表的考古发现后，她在罗懋登史诗般的历史著作《三宝太监西洋记》中，发现了令人惊讶的舰队详细航程时间表和位置线索。罗懋登书成于 1597 年（出版于 1598 年），共 20 卷 100 回，超过 75 万字。

Allowing for literary license and missing jigsaw pieces, Dr. Wang convincingly deduces, step by step, that during Zheng He's seventh and last voyage (started from 1430 A.D.), his squadrons of the massive "treasure fleet" did not stay together throughout. Admiral Zheng He ordered his assistant envoy Hong Bao to lead a squadron to Gu-li/Calicut in India while he and the other Principal Envoy Wang Jinghong would lead the remaining fleet for wider explorations.

经过深入阐释《三宝太监西洋记》中的文学叙述和填补谜团中仍然缺失的某些部分后，王博士令人信服地一步一步得出结论。她指出郑和的第七次也是最后一次航行（始于公元 1430 年）期间，庞大“宝船舰队”的分舰并没有一直待在一起，海军上将郑和命令副使洪保带领一个分舰前往印度古里/卡利卡特，而他本人则与另一位正使王景弘率领剩余的舰队进行更广远的探索性航行。

According to Dr. Wang, later (in 1432 A.D.), Hong Bao ordered Ma Huan and six other senior officers to board a Calicut merchant junk for trade to Tunisia and the delegation also went on a pilgrimage to Tunisia's Mosque of Uqba in Kairouan, the "Mecca" of North Africa. After proceeding to the Arabian Sea, Hong Bao himself visited Hormuz (in today's Iran) near the Persian Gulf. Eventually, he regrouped with Wang Jinghong in Calicut to return to China in July 1433.

根据王博士的论述，洪保于 1432 年抵达卡利卡特后不久，即命令马欢和其他 6 名高级官员登上一艘卡利卡特商船，前往默伽国（古代北非突尼斯）进行贸易，代表团还前往突尼斯的凯鲁万乌克巴清真寺（北非的“麦加”）朝圣。

后来洪保又横渡阿拉伯海，访问波斯湾附近的霍尔木兹（今伊朗）。最后，他在卡利卡特与王景弘会聚，于1433年7月返回中国。

Meanwhile, according to Dr. Wang's research, Admiral Zheng He and Wang Jinghong led the remaining fleet to visit Liushan/Maldives and several small countries in today's India before they proceeded to the east coast of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Hormuz, and Aden (in today's Yemen). There, Wang Jinghong separated company with Zheng He to escort envoys from eleven countries (including from Mecca) to pay homage to China. At this point, Admiral Zheng He, born to a Muslim family, decided to visit Mecca (in today's Saudi Arabia) on pilgrimage.

同时，根据王博士的研究，海军上将郑和和正使王景弘率领剩余的舰队继续访问了溜山/马尔代夫和今天印度的几个小国，再前往非洲东海岸、阿拉伯半岛、霍尔木兹和亚丁（在今天的也门）。在亚丁，两人分离，王景弘陪同11个国家（包括麦加）的使节返国向中国朝贡。此时，穆斯林家庭出身的郑和决定前往麦加（今天的沙特阿拉伯）朝圣。

After Mecca, Admiral Zheng He went for the open ocean for wider explorations, presumably in search of the missing Imperial Seal of China (also one of the main objectives of these extraordinary Voyages). Quoting detailed timeline and weather descriptions in Luo Maodeng's tome, including the sailing for nearly 100 days without seeing land, and some two more months in adverse weather conditions, Dr. Wang deduces from oceanic current patterns that the fleet probably followed the Agulhas Current, the Benguela Current (after rounding the southern tip of Africa), the South Equatorial Current, the North Equatorial Current, the Gulf Stream and sailed against the Labrador Current to reach the Grand Banks – the world's foggiest area and a prolific fishing ground. After overcoming the dense fog, the fleet sailed for about one more month until they were stopped by an accident near the Labrador coast. The Cape Breton Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is nearby. There, ruins with Chinese characteristics were first discovered in 2002 by Paul Chiasson, a local Canadian architect born on the island, who published his research findings in his May 2006 book – *The Island of Seven Cities: Where the Chinese Settled When They Discovered America*. With its strategic location facing the Atlantic Ocean and a temperate coastal climate, the island would be an ideal location to serve as the Chinese mariners' Atlantic base, as suggested by T. C. Bell, a British surveyor specializing in Roman and Chinese engineering, who explored the island extensively in 2005.

麦加之后，海军上将郑和继续前往远洋进行更广远的探索性航行，可能意图寻找遗失的中国帝王传国玉玺（这也是这些非凡航程的主要目标之一）。引用罗懋登书卷中的详细时间表和天气描述，包括航行将近 100 天而没有看到陆地，以及在恶劣天气下再航行两个多月；王博士从洋流模式推断出，舰队可能顺著阿古拉斯洋流、本吉拉洋流（必须先绕过非洲的南端）、南赤道洋流、北赤道洋流、墨西哥湾流、并逆着拉布拉多洋流航行，而到达了大浅滩这个世界浓雾最迷漫地区和多产渔场的附近。在克服浓雾之后，舰队又航行了一个多月，直到他们在拉布拉多海岸附近的一次事故后才著岸停止前进。圣劳伦斯湾的布雷顿角岛就在附近。保罗·夏亚松（Paul Chiasson）是一位岛上出生的加拿大本地建筑师，他于 2002 年在岛上首次发现一片具有中国特色的古迹遗址，并于 2006 年发表了他的研究成果《最早发现北美洲的中国移民》（译者：暴永宁；英文原著为 *The Island of Seven Cities: Where the Chinese Settled When They Discovered America*）。布雷顿角岛具有面向大西洋的战略位置，再加上沿海地区气候温和，正如专门研究古罗马和古中国工程的英国测量师 T. C. 贝尔（T. C. Bell）所建议的那样，布雷顿角岛会是中国水手大西洋基地的理想地点；贝尔于 2005 年对该岛进行了广泛的探测。

Dr. Wang suggests that onwards, Admiral Zheng He's contingent used light river boats to cross consecutively the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron and finally, Lake Michigan. The journey required the Chinese mariners to traverse two short land routes to pass the Niagara Falls and the Chicago swampland. From Lake Michigan they sailed down the Illinois River to reach the Mississippi River. At the junction – north of St. Louis – of the Mississippi River and the Missouri River, the Admiral's boats docked. There, Zheng He's scout Wang Ming was sent to explore this foreign land and he encountered a strange city, Cahokia, a little over 30 kilometers from the shore. It was the largest pre-Columbian city north of Mexico, whose ruins became today's Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in the central Mississippi Valley. Luo Maodeng called Cahokia the Fengdu Ghost Country (a city state). While trying to project Cahokia/Fengdu Ghost Country with an image similar to the legendary ghost city Fengdu in China to describe his narratives under a "veil", Luo Maodeng also explicitly pointed out that the two places were far apart.

王博士提出她的见解，认为海军上将郑和的队伍开始使用轻型河船先后穿越圣劳伦斯河、安大略湖、伊利湖、休伦湖以及最后的密歇根湖；此行程需要中国水手穿越两条短途陆路，才能通过尼亚加拉大瀑布和芝加哥沼泽地。通

过密歇根湖后，他们沿伊利诺河航行到达密西西比河，最后海军上将郑和的船队停靠在圣路易斯以北，密西西比河和密苏里河的交界处附近。在那里，郑和的侦察员王明被派去探索岸上的这片异国他乡，而王明遇到了一个陌生的城市卡霍基亚（Cahokia），距离交界处的河岸仅 30 多公里。卡霍基亚是前哥伦布时期墨西哥以北的最大城市，其废墟成为今天密西西比河谷中部地区的卡霍基亚土墩遗址。罗懋登称卡霍基亚为酆都鬼国（是一个城邦国）。罗懋登一方面以类似于中国传说中鬼城酆都的形象影射卡霍基亚（酆都鬼国），试图为他的叙述真相蒙上一层“面纱”以制造错觉，另一方面又明确指出鬼城酆都与卡霍基亚（酆都鬼国）两地相距甚远。

Comparing ancient maps, Dr. Wang demonstrated that the Zheng He mariners' success in exploring the central Mississippi Valley probably relied on the earlier Chinese discovery of this area (but not the Great Lakes) during a journey of the sixth voyage approaching from the Gulf of Mexico.

通过比较古代地图，王博士展示郑和水手探索密西西比河谷中部地区的成功，可能取决于郑和在较早的第六次航行中从墨西哥海湾海岸登陆（而不是通过五大湖地区），已经发现该地区。

Dr. Wang observes that ancient Chinese astronomy texts in the second century B.C. already had concepts of a spherical earth, and a Chinese ancient wooden map dated 1093 was found from a Daoist tomb unearthed in 1971 showing the profiles of the world's five inhabited continents including the Americas and Australia. This suggests that the Chinese discovered the contours of the actual world much earlier than the West.

王博士注意到公元前 2 世纪的中国古代天文学文献已经有球形地球的概念，并且从 1971 年出土的道教坟墓中，发现了中国古代 1093 年的木制地图，该地图显示了世界有人居住的五大洲（包括美洲和澳大利亚）的概况。这表明中国人比西方人更早以前已经发现了真实世界的轮廓。

Dr. Wang refers to findings of T.C. Bell about Moeraki being the largest Chinese harbor site in New Zealand and the “Moeraki stone balls” being scattered on the beachfront of the South Island. These stone balls are thought to be cannon balls of mobile giant catapults used by the Treasure Ships in their seventh voyage's skirmishes. Bell also discovered the ruins of a shipyard capable of building the largest Treasure Ship in the South Island as well as those of rammed earth walls

with stone cores complete with a semi-circular city enclosure typical of ancient Chinese architecture in the North Island. Dr. Wang surmises that most probably New Zealand was a Pacific base for Treasure Ships, including those in the seventh and last voyage, which probably met an untimely destruction by the heat from a falling meteorite.

王博士提到 T. C. 贝尔发现摩拉基 (Moeraki) 是新西兰最大的中国港口所在地，和散落在南岛海滩上的“摩拉基石球”。这些石球被认为是宝船舰队在第七次航程的小规模冲突中，曾经使用过的机动巨型弹射器炮弹。贝尔在南岛上发现了一个造船厂的废墟，该造船厂能够建造最大的宝船；还在北岛上发现典型中国古代半圆形瓮城建筑的夯土围墙，墙心有石支撑。王博士推测，新西兰很可能是宝船舰队的太平洋基地，包括在第七和最后一次航行中被使用的宝船，而这些宝船可能由于一颗陨石坠落，不巧、也不幸地被其散发的高热摧毁殆尽。

Dr. Wang refers to an artifact discovered in early 21st century, a plain copper medallion of seven centimeters in diameter with the inscription “*Authorized and awarded by Xuan De of Great Ming*”: as first suggested by Dr. S. L. Lee, it may have been the medallion awarded to Admiral Zheng He by the Ming Emperor Xuanzong before the seventh and last voyage. The artifact was unearthed four inches below the surface in North Carolina. Dr. Wang therefore poses the question whether Admiral Zheng eventually stayed and died in North America.

王博士提及 21 世纪初所发现一件直径为 7 厘米的铜质纪念章文物，上面刻有“大明宣德委锡”（“锡”字，同“赐”）的字样；如李兆良博士首先提出的那样，它可能是海军上将郑和第七次也是最后一次航行之前由明宣宗授予郑和的纪念章。该文物是在北卡罗来纳州地面以下四英寸处出土的，因此，王博士提出了一个问题：郑和是否最后留于、并终于北美？

Dr. Wang’s latest book is full of insightful deductions and analyses. Relying extensively on a historical novel, however erudite, has drawbacks. It is sometimes not easy to distinguish fact from fiction, especially in verbal conversations between characters. Nevertheless, the meticulous combination of oceanography, meteorology, botany, historical texts and maps, archeological finds, coupled with earlier research and collaboration with prominent scholars, lends much credence to the veracity of Dr. Wang’s conclusions. A historical analogue may be the famous story of the Trojan Horse in Homer’s epic poem *Iliad*, which led to the archaeological discovery of Troy in Turkey. In a new era of expanding global

Chinese connectivity, Dr. Wang's many fascinating leads may well blaze a trail for on-site carbon-dating archaeological research, which she would warmly welcome to substantiate or throw more light on her eye-opening findings or deductions.

王博士的最新著作充满了深刻的推论和分析。广泛依赖历史小说，无论如何博学多识，都会有弊端，因为有时很难区分事实与小说，特别是人物之间的口头交谈。尽管如此，运用海洋学、气象学、植物学、历史文本和地图，配以考古发现的精心组合，再加上早期的研究心得和与著名学者的合作，为王博士结论的真实性提供了很大的可信度。荷马史诗《伊利亚特》(*Iliad*)中关于特洛伊木马的著名故事，最终导致了土耳其特洛伊城的考古发现，可能是一个历史上相似的例子。在这个中国扩展与全球相联的新时代中，王博士许多引人入胜的线索，可能会为放射性碳年代鉴定的现场考古研究，开辟一条道路，她将热烈欢迎以这些研究所能提供的更多线索，来验证或揭示她令人大开眼界的发现或推断。

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China Futures Fellow, Berkshire Publishing Group, Massachusetts, USA (2011-13)

Brain Trust member, The Evian Group (global think-tank), Lausanne, Switzerland

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International Expert, Reuters Insight Community of Experts, Thomson Reuters

Senior Analyst, [Wikistrat](#), a cloud-sourced global strategic consultancy based in Tel Aviv and Washington D.C.

Senior Consultant, MEC International (a UK-based global strategic energy consultancy)

Distinguished Contributor, Asymmetric Threats Contingency Alliance (ATCA) (global think-tank)

Professor of Practice, [Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development](#) (2018-20)

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Think-tank Research Fellow, [Beijing Normal University](#), Zhuhai Campus, PRC (14.4.2017-13.4.2020)

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Global Commercial Agent, Changsha City, China

Hong Kong Advisory Board member, Denmark-based Executive Global Network (EGN)

Visiting Professor, London Metropolitan University Business School

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Advisory Board member, China Policy Institute, Nottingham University, UK (2005 -2010)

Visiting Professor, Sun Yat-sen University Business School, China (2005-10)

Founding Chairman, China Group, Institute of Directors City Branch, London, UK (2006-2010)

Vice Chairman, 48 Group Club, UK (2008-2010)

Committee Member of RSA, London Region, UK (2006-2010)

Included in UK's Who's Who since 2002

Awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star (SBS) in the July 2005 Hong Kong Honours List