



# STUDY GUIDE

## ***1421: The Year China Discovered America? Documentary***

*NOTE: When you view the documentary, keep in mind that the presentation in Part I basically takes the seven voyages of Zheng He and combines them into a single narrative that progresses from leaving China to the Star Fleet's visit to the East African coast. You need to keep this in mind because that narrative approach gives an impression that the Chinese visited everywhere from the Chinese coast to East Africa in one voyage.*

### ***Part I: The Voyages***

- 1.** In the documentary, how does Menzies say that he developed his idea for *1421*? Compare this account with the account described in *Invented Knowledge*, which is based on the transcript of an interview with Menzies on Australian radio.
- 2.** How are the descriptions of Zheng He's background and voyages in the documentary the same and different from the Dreyer book?
- 3.** What were the debates about the size of Zheng He's ships?
- 4.** What type of sailors did Zheng He recruit for his fleet? And what were his reasons for recruiting this group?
- 5.** How did the Chinese fleet change the fortunes of the port of Malacca?
- 6.** What did the Chinese say was the mission and nature of Zheng He's voyages? How did the presence of large numbers of soldiers, including the ways they were used, contradict those claims?
- 7.** Compare and contrast Chinese and Arabic navigational science? Who influenced who?
- 8.** What was the Chinese impact on East Africa?
- 9.** Which exotic animal most impressed the Chinese and why? How did they get one of the animals back to their emperor in China?

## **Part II: New Theories**

**1.** What are the theories of Gavin Menzies concerning the voyages of Zheng He?

**2.** What is his evidence?

- Nicolo da Conti's narrative
- Fra Mauro's map
- Pizzagano map
- Bimini Road
- Shark formation
- Native American DNA
- Newport Tower
- Verrazano's narrative

**3.** How do scholars respond to Menzies's evidence?

- Nicolo da Conti's narrative
- Fra Mauro's map
- Pizzagano map
- Bimini Road
- Shark formation
- Native American DNA
- Newport Tower
- Verrazano's narrative

**4.** What evidence is presented about the various Chinese inscriptions? How does Menzies use it and what do Chinese scholars think it means?

**5.** How does Menzies hold up under questioning by the documentary film crew?



This document is taken from the webpage  
<http://www.corndancer.com/fritze/invntdknwdg/sg-onfrtwne.html>

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