

which virtually stopped space exploration, after Apollo

Man on the Moon, and on Mars

In *A Passion for Mars*, Chaikin not only sheds light on the passion of the scientists, engineers, and managers who have created the Mars exploration programs, but weaves his own personal story throughout the book. From a childhood interest in, and fascination with Mars, he traces his academic study, his participation in Mars missions at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and his decision to write about this remarkable quest of exploration, rather than become a professional planetary geologist.

Chaikin's previous work, *A Man on the Moon*, which was made into an HBO series titled "From the Earth to the Moon," was based on interviews with the Apollo astronauts. Similarly, *A Passion for Mars* combines the facts of the history of Mars exploration, with the personal histories and personalities, of the central figures.

In explaining his approach to the writing of space history, Chaikin says: "I never pretended that I was impartial. I am not an objective academic. That's not my role. I've tried to delve into the history with a point of view." Like James Webb, Tom Paine, Wernher von Braun, and the other space scientists, engineers, and visionar-

ies, Chaikin says, "One of the reasons that I find space exploration so compelling, is that you have to be focussed on the long term. You have to be thinking not only of the future of our current society, but the future of the human species."

This space exploration program, Chaikin says: "is going to continue long after you and I are gone, and will keep going as long as humans are capable of exploration. I feel that it is a real blessing to have in your life, an interest in something that is so profound and so far-reaching. The things that excited me when I was five years old are still exciting today, and they're just as compelling."

Christopher Columbus's Mission

by Charles Hughes

Christopher Columbus, the Last Templar

by Ruggero Marino

(Translated by Ariel Godwin)

Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 2007

Paperback, 368 pp., \$19.95

Ruggero Marino is a veteran journalist who has worked for the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo* in Rome since 1963. For many years he has also been a Columbus researcher, and he wrote a previous book on Columbus in 1992, *Cristoforo Colombo e Il Papa Tradito* (Christopher Columbus and the Betrayed Pope), available in Italian.

Marino, whose name ironically translates as "sailor," is a firm defender of the reputation of Columbus: "Centuries of injustice have reduced the man who enlarged the world, to someone ignorant who was limited to making it smaller. How has the belief persisted for five hundred years, that he thought he had arrived in China, when he knew he must seek a mythical land—especially considering the Indies referred to Eastern lands but not those that formed the Chinese Empire?" Marino asks.

Instead, Marino says, Columbus was part of a grand design to discover the New World! The Columbus expedition, he

says, was a carefully planned project, led by Pope Innocent VIII, with Nicholas of Cusa, the polymath Paolo Toscanelli, and other Italian humanists.

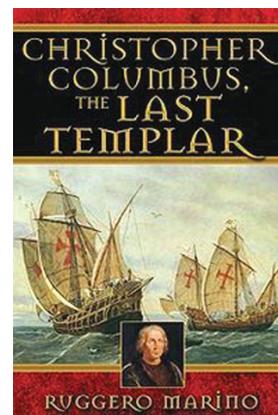
Less successfully, Marino tries to show that Columbus was likely one of Pope Innocent VIII's 12 illegitimate children, known then as his nephews and nieces. This Pope, John Baptiste Cybo, was a patron of Italian Humanism, and was of Greek or Jewish and Muslim background. He was born on the Island of Chios, which in the 15th Century was under the rule of Genoa.

The grand plan was to discover and colonize lands in the western Atlantic, before the Turks thought of doing this. At the same time, Pope Innocent VIII was tireless in his efforts to make peace with the Turkish Sultan.

The Evidence

The book is dense with the historical connections of all those involved in this humanist project, which I won't attempt to fully summarize. The crucial points are these:

When Cusa died in Todi in 1464, there was a conference held at his death bed, attended by Toscanelli, the famous mapmaker Bussi, and Martinez, another mapmaker. Bussi was also a custodian of the



Vatican Library. Columbus, who was then about 13 years old, was discussed.

In describing the deathbed meeting, Marino, among other things, quotes from a 1910 book published in Italian by Pirro Alvi, titled *Todi Città Illustre dell Umbria* (Todi, Illustrious City of Umbria):

"And here we must speak of the famous Nicholas of Cusa, who died in our city. Acknowledged by many, he was the most well-read Cardinal that the sacred robe ever honored, the dearest friend of the great Pius II. At his deathbed were Toscanelli, Bussi, and Martinez witnesses to his testament. Columbus was discussed and the discovery of the New World."

This meeting was crucial for future ex-

changes of letters between Columbus and Toscanelli, as well as Columbus's marriage into the minor Portuguese royalty, to Donna Filippa.

As for the question of Columbus's maps: The Vatican at this time was the only institution in the world which could have had printed proof of Western Atlantic lands. For example, about the year 1100, the Church had sent a Bishop to collect tithes in Greenland and in the Norse colony of Vinland, which is now called Labrador. The Labrador cod fishing grounds were well known by 1300 to the fisherman of Bristol, England.¹

A major mystery relating to the discovery of America, was, did Columbus have a map of the Americas? Marino thinks that he did, but offers little proof in his chapter titled "Three Map Monte."

Most accounts of the voyage of Columbus, including Marino's, tell you that Columbus attempted to get the Spanish King and Queen to support his expedition, without success, until early in 1492. At that point, ready to give up, Columbus visited the Rabida Monastery, and confided in Luis Sanangel, who collected money for the Church. Columbus then was allowed one more meeting with the royal couple, where he supposedly showed them either a book or a map, or a book containing a map, and was supported at once by the King and Queen.

A Map Showing America?

What did Columbus show them? Was it a map, or a book containing a map, which showed the American continents? Evidence that this is the case can be found in other sources such as Volume V in Washington Irving's *Collected Works, Columbus and His Companions* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1851). In the Appendix, Irving gives a detailed account of the testimony at a trial in 1515, where Arias Perez Pinzon, the son of Columbus's second-in-command, Martin Alonso Pinzon, was attempting to share in the wealth of the discovery by bringing suit against the heirs of Columbus, after his death in 1508.

Arias Perez Pinzon, Irving said, testified that on a visit with his father to the Papal Library, a "person learned in cosmogra-

phy" had given them a document containing "a passage by an historian as old as the time of Solomon." The document said, "Navigate the Mediterranean Sea to the end of Spain and thence towards the setting sun, in a direction between north and south, until ninety-five degrees of longitude, and you will find the land of Cipango, fertile and abundant, and equal in greatness to Africa and Europe."

The son claimed that his father copied the document and intended to look for the new land, and that he had given Columbus a copy just before they set sail.

Irving states that although Arias Perez Pinzon had implied that this is what motivated Columbus's discovery, "Columbus had long before, however, had a knowledge of the work, if not by actual inspection, at least through his correspondence with Toscanelli in 1474, and had derived from it all the light it was capable of furnishing, before he ever came to Palos [from where he launched his journey]."

"Columbus set sail on Aug. 3, 1492. The Pope, who had been in good health, died suddenly soon afterwards. In later times, both Innocent VIII and Columbus's discoveries and affiliation with the New World project, were ruthlessly covered up, and also slandered, by the Spanish oligarchy.

This book is worth reading for its great detail on the world of Columbus's time, and the connections among the people involved in the humanist plot to create America.

I am still puzzled, however, as to why Marino included in the title the phrase "The Last Templar," for he mentions almost nothing about the Templars, who had been outlawed in most countries, except England, Scotland, and Portugal. The only connection is that Columbus was a member of the Knights of Christ in Portugal, which was the successor to the Templar organization, and he used the Templar emblem on his sails. Also Columbus's second wife's father was an official in the Templars in Portugal.

Notes

1. For details, see Mark Kurlansky: *Cod: The Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*, (New York: Walker & Company, 1997).

Global Warming Update

Continued from page 11

emissions at the same time. Heads of government have other things on their minds."

And it isn't only Europe. On Nov. 28, Jim Prentice, the new Canadian Environmental Minister, said in his first speech after taking office: "We will not—and let me be clear on this—we will not aggravate an already weakening economy in the name of environmental progress."

Carbon Limits Kill, Says Indian Official

Capping his country's emissions would threaten the country's growth, and prevent it from alleviating the "energy poverty" which sees 500 million people live in darkness, India's top negotiator at the U.N. climate conference in Poland told the British daily *The Guardian*, Dec. 8.

"In India I need to give electricity for lightbulbs to half a billion. In the West you want to drive your Mercedes as fast as you want. We have 'survival' emissions, you have lifestyle emissions," Shyam said.

Carbon Caps Will Hurt Poor, Says London Think-Tank

"A cap on emissions of carbon would do little to protect humanity against the threat of climate change but would drastically increase the threat of global economic catastrophe," said a report issued by the International Policy Network in London on the opening day of the United Nations climate conference in Poznan, Poland.

The report, authored by Prof. Julian Morris of the University of Buckingham, said: "For Ministers in Poznan to agree to cap carbon emissions in the near term would be economic lunacy. It would divert resources into "low carbon" technologies and away from more productive uses—thereby harming the ability of the poor to address the real problems they face every day, such as diseases, water scarcity and inadequate nutrition."