

does not sense a particularly sympathetic narrator. Henry remains stiff, a martinet of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, since Henry's reputation has long rested on his status as the original mythoclast of modernity, it is somehow fitting that he receive himself so mythoclastic a memorial as *Prince Henry "the Navigator."* The scare quotes speak volumes.

The more work Russell does to show how far the Henry of myth has departed from the historical Henry, the more fascinating do the Henrican legends become: How did someone who never sailed any farther than Tangiers end up with the sobriquet "the Navigator"? Whence the tales of his "School of Sagres," an academy of cartography and celestial navigation that never existed but has haunted Henrican scholarship (and Portuguese nationalism) in the twentieth century? Russell has written about these matters elsewhere, as have others, but he has put them aside here, even as they become more urgent with each studious page. It is the peril of mythoclasts everywhere: the better they succeed in showing how wrong we were, the more captivating do our erstwhile illusions become.

D. GRAHAM BURNETT

Kirsten A. Seaver. *Maps, Myths, and Men: The Story of the Vinland Map.* xxi + 480 pp., illus., bibl., index. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. \$24.95 (paper).

In 1964 Yale University Library acquired a small black-and-white world map which may or may not represent the earliest cartographic depiction of the Americas made in Europe: in the upper left corner of the faded parchment, slightly to the west of an easily recognizable (too easily recognizable?) Greenland, appears an island identified as "Vinlanda." The temptation to identify this as an allusion to the "Vinland" of Norse lore, a region associated with Newfoundland and the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, has been understandably strong. If the map can be dated to the mid fifteenth century, as its defenders claim, it would therefore appear to be unique graphic testimony to pre-Colombian European knowledge of the northern "New World." Since archaeological evidence puts it now more or less beyond dispute that roving Scandinavians did indeed spend time in North America, the thin sheet of the Vinland Map no longer needs bear the heavy burden of usurping Columbus's priority. But the burdens on Beinecke MS 350A remain considerable.

In this book, Kirsten Seaver, a gifted independent writer and diligent historian, offers a multi-

pronged attack on the authenticity of this beguiling artifact, which must be ranked with the Shroud of Turin in the pantheon of sensational pseudo-historical flotsam that professional historians mostly stopped caring about long ago—leaving the field to retired chemical engineers, monomaniacal sleuths spinning bizarre cloak and dagger conspiracies, and monolingual webmasters on break from multi-player fantasy games. In this taxonomy, unfortunately, Seaver's exhaustive, informative, but finally maddening study—its merits notwithstanding—must be located in or near category two.

First, the scope and virtues of the exercise. In a pair of introductory chapters, Seaver, who has an enviable command of several difficult and necessary languages, offers the English reader an immensely useful summary of Norse enterprise around North America before 1500 (she has written on this topic before, and puts that work to good use here). In the subsequent six well-footnoted essays, she attends to the Vinland map itself, addressing in turn: its (distressingly vague) provenance; the physical features of the two manuscripts with which it came to light (and which arguably shed light on its origins); the (somewhat suspect) story of its public "unveiling," which was carefully controlled by a set of scholars largely committed to its authenticity; the forensic investigations conducted over the last forty years to assess the age of its paper (apparently old) and ink (apparently pretty recent); its distinctive cartographic forms and their precedents (when these can be found); and its textual component, consisting of a range of toponyms and several longer legends which raise interpretive problems.

Historians of technology may admire several strikingly detailed pages on the history of the modern pigment industry in the US and Norway during the interwar period. Since an important bit of evidence for the map's recent composition is bound up with technical features of the modern milling of anatase (a form of titanium dioxide used in the preparation of inks), Seaver goes so far as to reconstruct a remarkable timeline for the mining, preparation, and commercial availability of industrial anatase pigments in Europe and elsewhere. Historians of scholarship, connoisseurship, and cartography will appreciate Seaver's careful archival work in the correspondence of the curators, book-dealers, philanthropists, publishers, and historians whose tangled rigging of expertise, enthusiasm, generosity, optimism, and (yes, probably) hucksterism hoisted the map to prominence after 1965. If we needed to be reminded that there is a politics of knowl-

edge in the rare books department, Seaver has laid the issue to rest here; anyone who thought only scientists stage their discoveries should prepare to be disabused.

However, *Maps, Myths, and Men* will leave many historians of science pining for a very different book: one less vested in taking sides, and more interested in how those sides take shape. There is no engagement here, sadly, with the kind of work that Anthony Grafton has done (in *Forgers and Critics*) to reveal the larger theoretical and epistemological significance of deception. Similarly, an opportunity is missed for a critical examination of the place of the forensic sciences in modern textual scholarship. Seaver's material would yield richly under these forms of cultivation.

Seaver ultimately argues that the map was forged by the German Jesuit cartographic historian Joseph Fischer sometime after Hitler's rise to power in 1933 and that this beleaguered cleric, bearing up under the horrors of war-torn Europe, intended it as a wickedly clever Catch-22 to stump amoral Aryan propagandists: to use it as evidence of blond men's preemptive right to North America (as Hitler would surely desire) meant acknowledging the globe encompassing sway of the early Catholic Church (an anathema to Third Reich). Moreover, it just so happened that this same cartographic forgery would enable Fischer to strike an Oedipal blow against his *Doktorvater*, who had sniffed, once upon a time, at the young scholar's ideas about the Westward voyages of Claudius Clavus!

Get it? Neither do I. And I may even have it wrong: like *Casablanca*, it is a great, sweeping story involving Nazis, plunder, duplicity, and imperiled virtue; and, again like *Casablanca*, the plot is more or less incomprehensible when the lights come up.

In the end, I have no idea whether the Vinland map is real or faked; my impression is that the weight of expert opinion these days falls toward faked, but reasonable people seem to disagree. In such circumstances, we are left with the deliciously paradoxical advice offered by that chronicler of confidence men and their elaborate plots, Herman Melville (in *Israel Potter*): "You can't be too cautious, but don't be too suspicious. God bless you, my honest friend. Go!"

D. GRAHAM BURNETT

■ Early Modern (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)

Rebecca Bushnell. *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens*. Ithaca, N.Y.:

Cornell University Press, 2003. x + 198 pp., illus., index. \$29.95 (cloth).

To a thoughtful gardener, the hard work of gardening offers plenty of opportunity to mull over the wider connotations of growth and grafting, bud and blossom, cultivation and culture, nature and nurture. At the very least, gardens juxtapose the artificial and the natural; more often, they pit the two against one another. English humanist educators often likened the teacher to the gardener, each trying to bend the unruly twig to his bidding; it was this analogy that originally led Rebecca Bushnell to look into sixteenth- and seventeenth-century gardening manuals.

Historians of garden design and agriculture have long been interested in the genre, but historians of science have by and large ignored these books. Bushnell teaches us to see in them a valuable source of commentary on such issues of concern to historians of early modern science as novelty, curiosity, truth telling, progress, and order.

God planted the first garden, of course, and through the "delightful recreation of planting, we may gain some glimmering of that lost splendour," William Hughes preached to his readers in 1672 (*The Flower Garden*; quoted p. 102). A less obvious trope, however, is the garden as a reflection of human order. Bushnell brilliantly explicates the difficulties of "aligning the social order and natural order, when neither had a stable hierarchy of value" (p. 135).

Like court favorites, plants competed for the affections of their masters. Exotic strangers were admired, sought out, but never quite trusted. English gardeners, for example, lusted after the gillyflower (the carnation, introduced to western Europe in the fifteenth century), but the new streaked, scented, double-blossomed varieties were upstarts that could only be propagated by grafting. "Nature's bastards," Perdita calls them while proclaiming her own pure lineage (*The Winter's Tale*, Act 4:4; quoted p. 149).

The gillyflower's failure to breed true was a well-recognized symbol of the dangers of meddling with nature. From Francis Bacon onward, however, the gillyflower's variability also symbolized a phenomenon that demanded scientific investigation. As Bushnell observes, "it is fitting that the first English plant hybrid deliberately created through cross-pollination should involve a gilly-flower": the carnation/sweet William "mule" Thomas Fairchild had produced by 1717 (p. 159).

Rebecca Bushnell confesses that she is not a very successful or avid gardener. Nonetheless,