

Whose Knowledge Counts? Bringing critical archives into classroom enquiry

Steve Puttick







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The Geography Teaching Adventure

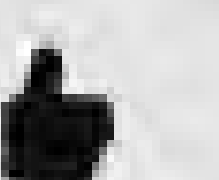
Reclaiming Exploration to Inspire Curriculum and Pedagogy

A David Fulton Book



“...we work in a planetary context so striated by colonialism...”

(Jazeel, 2019, p. 197)



**“...the ways in which we know
and are taught geography, now,
are connected to powerful
processes of colonialism,
exploration, and conquest.”**

(McKittrick, 2006, p.61)

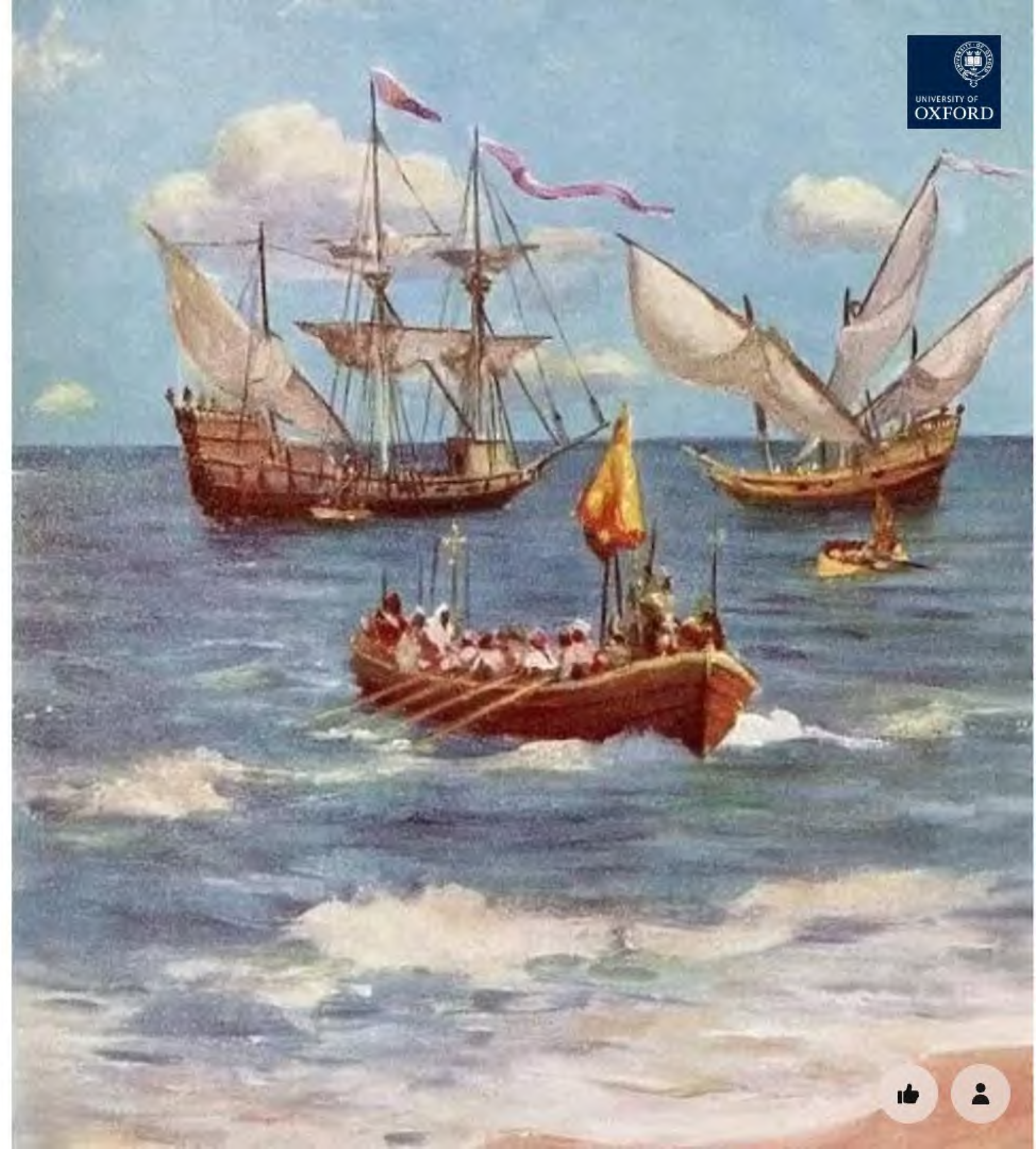
“The roots of geographical education lie in the natural curiosity that all of us have about places and ways of living other than our own. **We know little about the origins of those roots in Asia and Africa but as far as the European experience goes,** it may be traced back with certainty to hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. Homer’s *Odyssey* can be regarded as the first book to be mainly about travel, a prime stimulation to geographical study...”



“little [geographical education] survived as the ‘Dark Ages’ closed over Europe, as travel and exploration diminished...The flame of wider geographical education in British Schools was relatively dim until interest was renewed by the discoveries of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and by the beginnings of Empire...” (p.4)

“The voyaging ventures of the Portuguese are the most natural place to begin...”

(Livingstone, 1992)



After Dias, the Portuguese effort was... 'left to the indomitable Vasco Da Gama to go all the way and stake Portugal's claim... in India.'

(Livingstone, 1992, p.4)



‘...it paved the way for the domination of the west in the eastern sea. Vasco’s entry into the Indian Ocean announced the claim of the Portuguese for exclusive dominion over Indian-Ocean and soon Portugal became the mistress of the Eastern sea-route and they looked upon the sea as their own. **Vasco opened the gates of the mysterious East and solved the riddle of centuries...**’ (Mathew, 1988, p.115)

‘...stake Portugal’s claim...in India.
This he did in 1498 when on 22 May
he touched the south-western coast
of India, having displayed **stunning
navigational skills** in his route around
the Cape and across the Arabian Sea
and the Indian Ocean.’

(Livingstone, 1992, p.4)





¶ King Don
 loan the second of
 that name, & of the
 Kings of Portin-
 gale, the thirtieth,
 perceiuing that all
 the Spices, Drugs,
 Stones, and other
 riches, which came
 to Venice, were
 brought out of a
 certaine Idolatrie
 of the East parte:
 And as he was a
 Personage of an

hautie stomacke and valiant minde, so was he desirous to
 enlarge his Kingdome, and increase the Christian faith, and
 therefore he determined to discover by Sea, the Countrey,
 from whence so great plentie of riches came, that thereby
 his Subjects might be enriched, and his Kingdome of Por-
 tingale enioy all such commodities as came from thence to
 Venice. Moreover, to discover the same Countrey, he was

THE LUSIADS



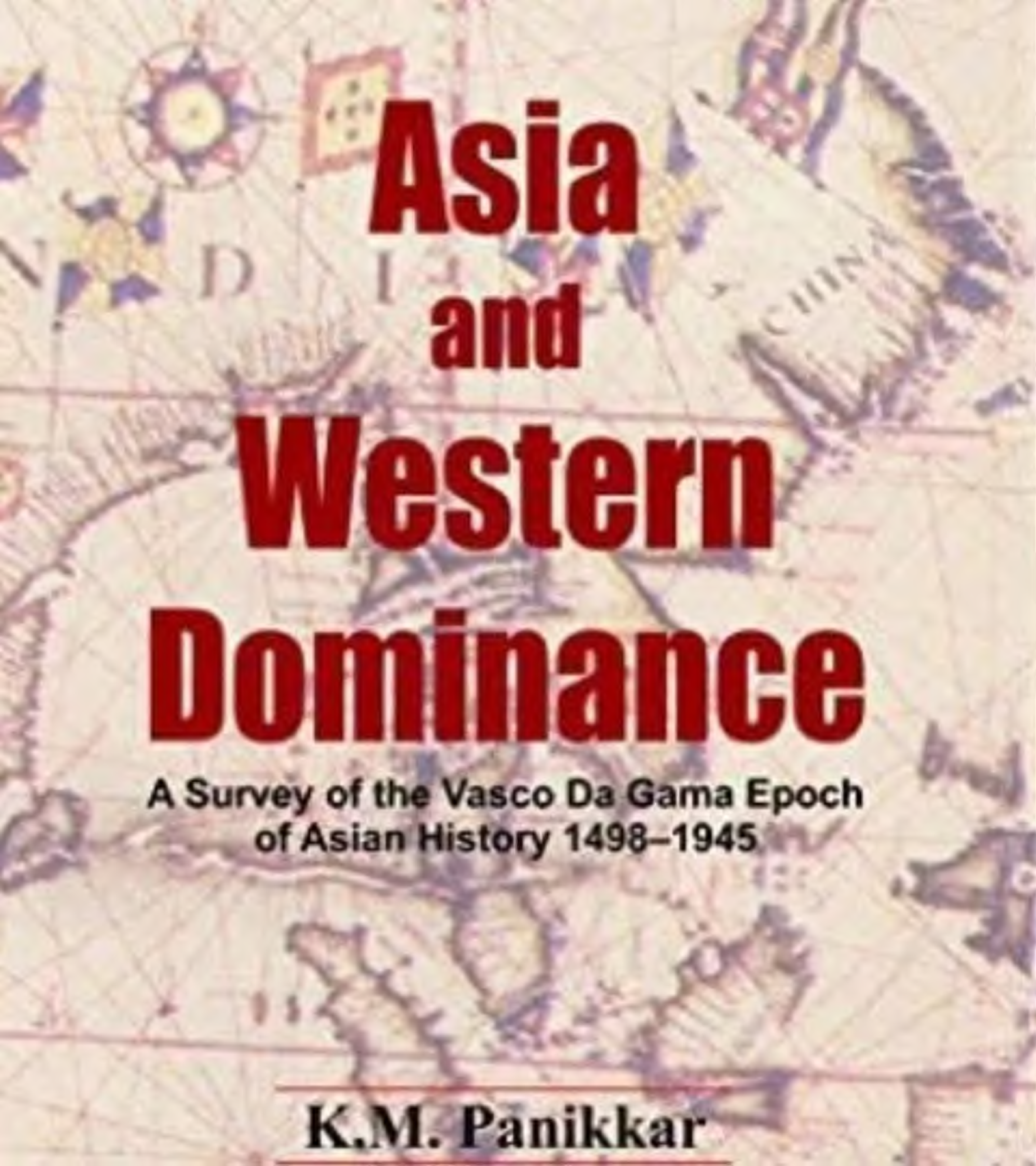
ENGLISHED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON

Epic poem by
Luís de
Camões (1572)

(This
translation
published
1880)

Cease the sage Grecian, and the Man of Troy 3
to vaunt long Voyage made in bygone day :
Cease Alexander, Trajan cease to 'joy
the fame of vict'ories that have pass'd away :
The noble Lusian's stouter breast sing I,
whom Mars and Neptune dared not disobey :
Cease all that antique Muse hath sung, for now
a better Brav'ry rears its bolder brow.

The book cover features a historical map of Asia and the Indian Ocean. A large, ornate compass rose is in the upper left corner. The title 'Asia and Western Dominance' is written in large, bold, red serif font. Below it, the subtitle 'A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History 1498-1945' is in a smaller, black serif font. At the bottom, the author's name 'K.M. Panikkar' is underlined in red.

Asia and Western Dominance

A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch
of Asian History 1498-1945

K.M. Panikkar

A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History 1498-1945

“Vasco Da Gama arrived at the port of Calicut...on May 26, 1498. Without doubt his arrival marks a turning-point in the history of India and Europe.”

(Panikkar, 1953, p.23)



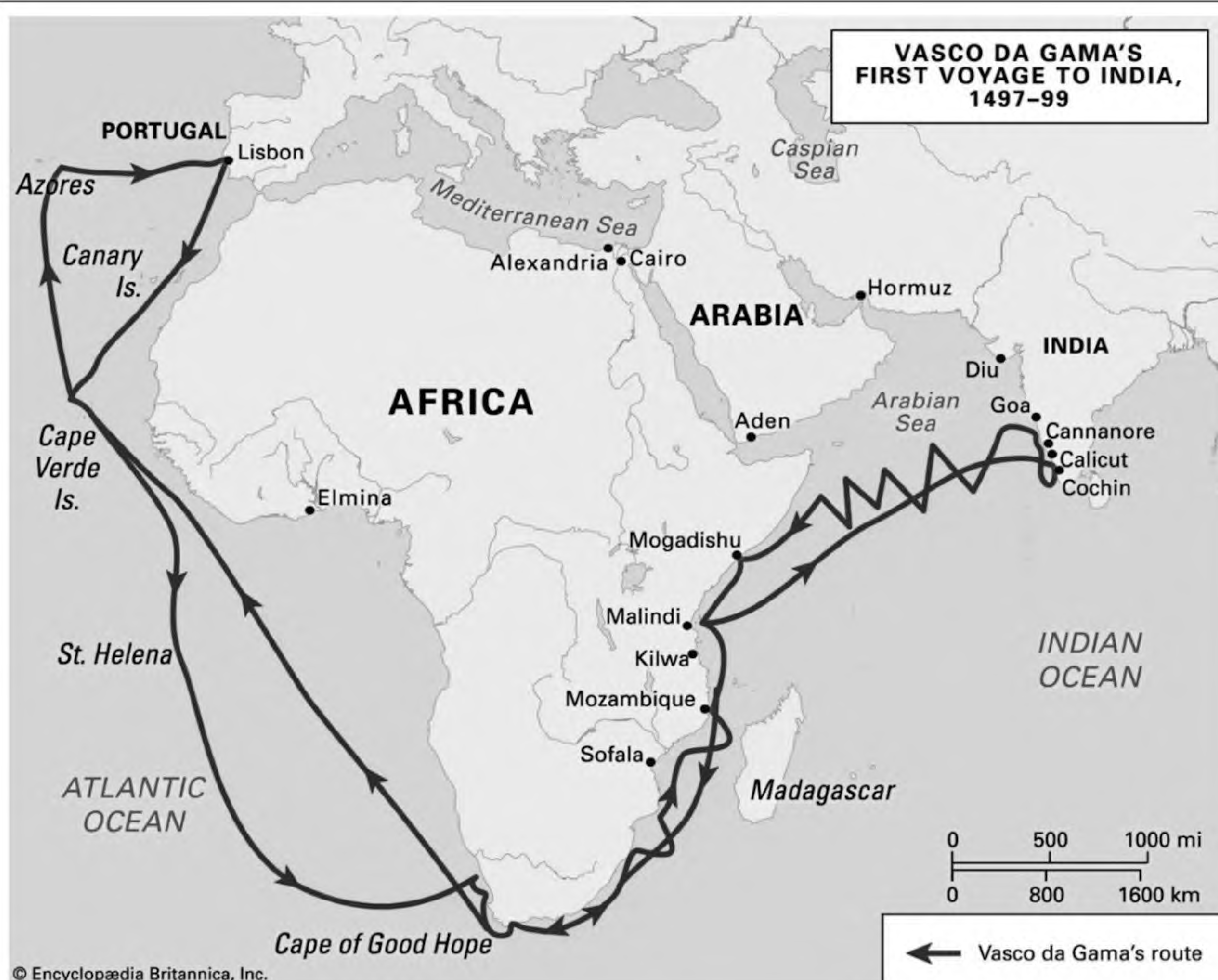
Turning the story 'upside down'



Sources

- Roterio (ship's journal by an unnamed author)
- Castanheda (English translation in 1582)
- Barros, Góis (Based on original sources and eyewitness accounts)
- Camoens (Epic poem *Os Lusíadas*, published 1572)
- Italian letters (Written from Lisbon to Florence, immediately after Gama's return)
- ...???







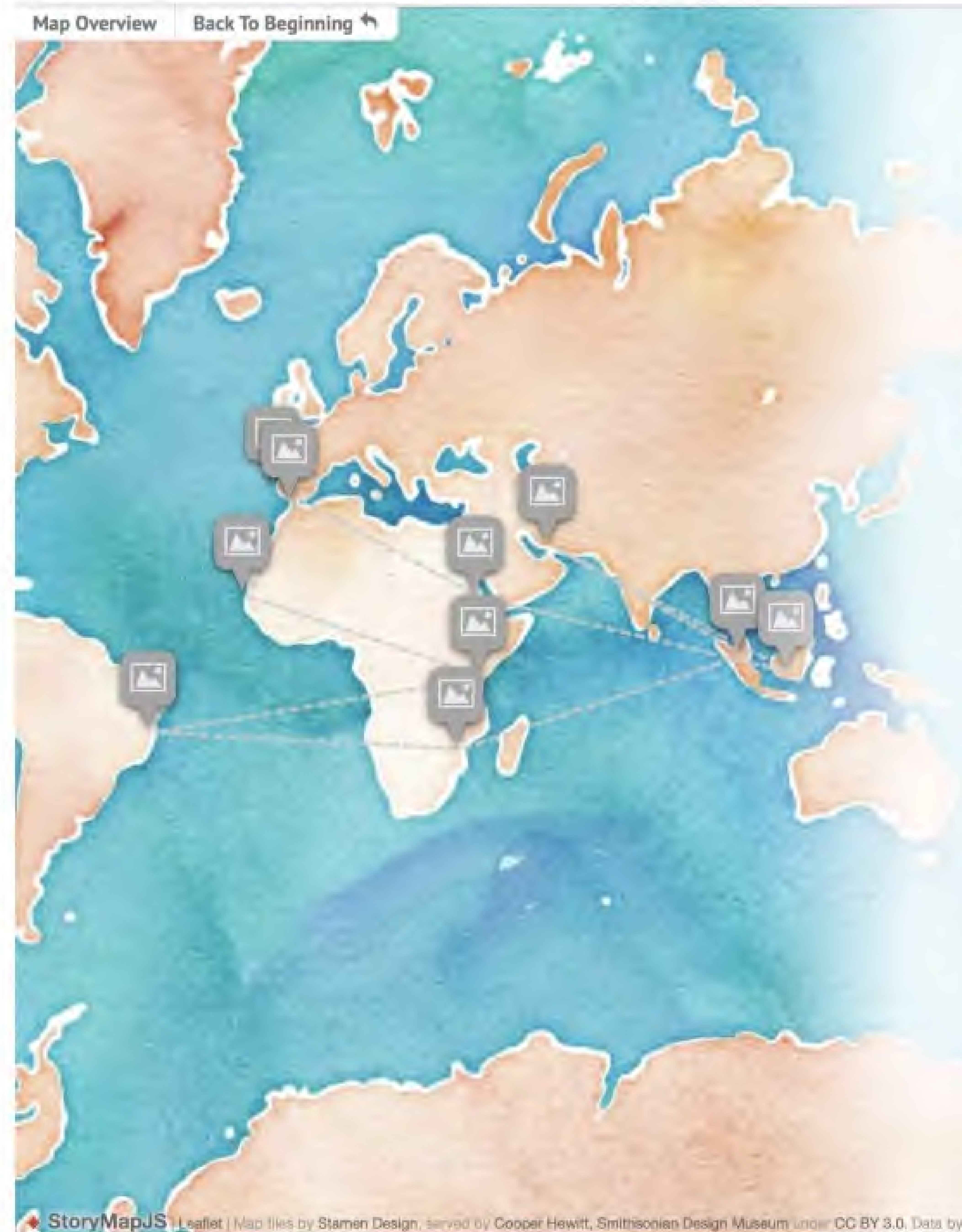
‘At break of day [April 14] we saw two boats (barcas) about three leagues to the leeward, in the open sea, and at once gave chase, with the intention of capturing them, **for we wanted to secure a pilot who would guide us to where we wanted to go.**’ (Roterio, 39)


‘We left Malindi on Tuesday, the 24th of the month [of April] for a city called Qualecut [Calecut], **with the pilot** whom the king had given us.’

‘On Sunday [May 20] we found ourselves close to some mountains, and **when we were near enough for the pilot to recognise them he told us** that they were above Calecut, and that this was the country we desired to go to.’



Map Overview
Back To Beginning ↶





Domingos Teixeira Planisphere (1573)

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IN EARLY GLOBAL NAVIGATION

You've probably heard the stories. In the fifteenth century, European men in ships went out and sailed across the oceans, ushering in a new era of global interconnectedness. But what if that isn't the full story? European ships were guided by the knowledge and know-how of many they encountered on their voyages. Charts, logbooks, letters, and chronicles give us an insight into how the Portuguese drew on the knowledge of local pilots and map-makers wherever they went. This story map gathers together traces in the archive of these exchanges and you'll see in all corners of the globe how knowledge was exchanged and agency shared.

Start Exploring

StoryMapJS | Leaflet | Map files by Stamen Design, served by Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum under CC BY 3.0. Data by OpenStreetMap, under CC BY SA.

<https://tinyurl.com/4mcfkm3s>

Turning other stories ‘upside down’





Vasco da Gama

The first European to reach India in 1498. Da Gama followed Dias' route down the west coast of Africa, crossing the equator and seeking the South Atlantic westerlies that Dias had discovered. Da Gama's expedition set sail from Lisbon on July 8, 1497, and reached India in May 1498. [🔗](#)

‘After this conversation they took him to their lodgings and gave him wheaten bread and honey. When he had eaten he returned to the ships, accompanied by one of the Moors, who was, no sooner on board, than he said these words: **“A lucky venture, a lucky venture! Plenty of rubies, plenty of emeralds! You owe great thanks to God, for having brought you to a country holding such riches!”** We were greatly astonished to hear his talk, for we never expected to hear our language spoken so far away from Portugal.’ (49)







Archives ‘not simply as historical repositories but as a complex of structures, processes, and epistemologies’

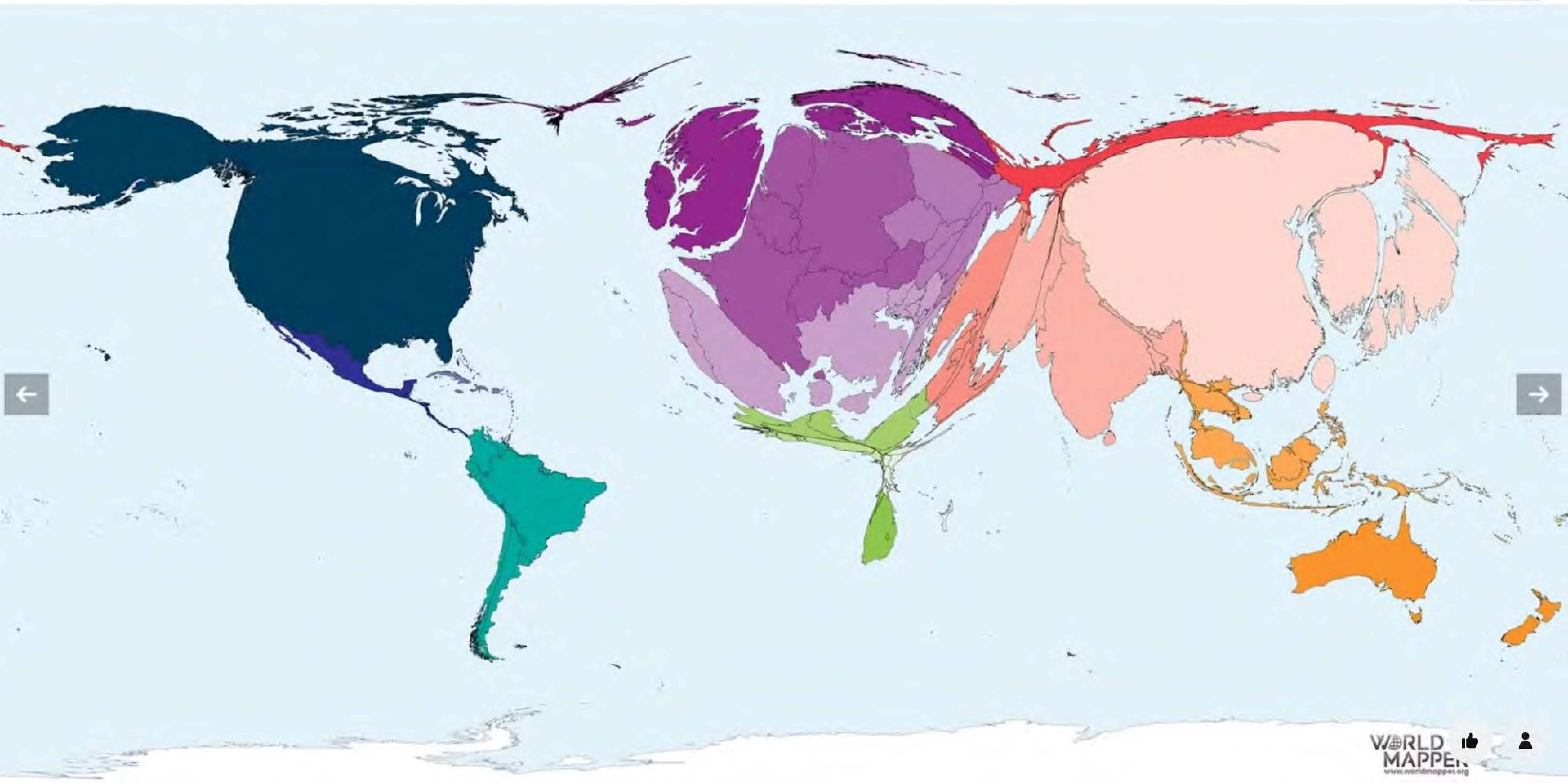
(Ketelaar, 2016, p.232)

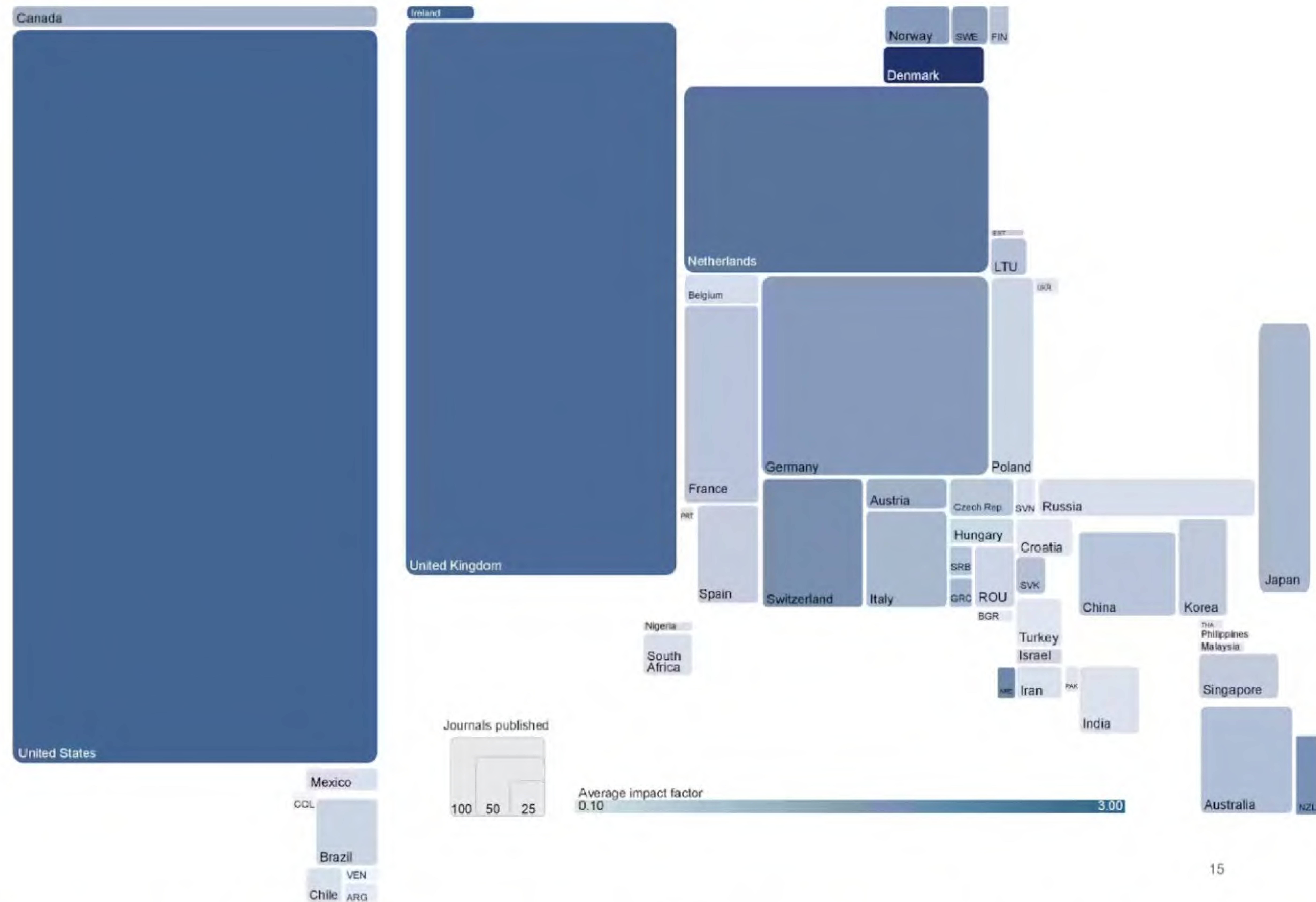
‘...the Portuguese, at least those who produced documents, were often racially prejudiced...most Portuguese thought it beneath their dignity to enquire into or describe Indian society, religion and culture. Indians, after all, were neither Europeans nor Christians, and **so the Portuguese thought that they had nothing to learn from them**’
(Pearson, 1981, p.7)

Who is the odd one out?



Science papers published (2016)

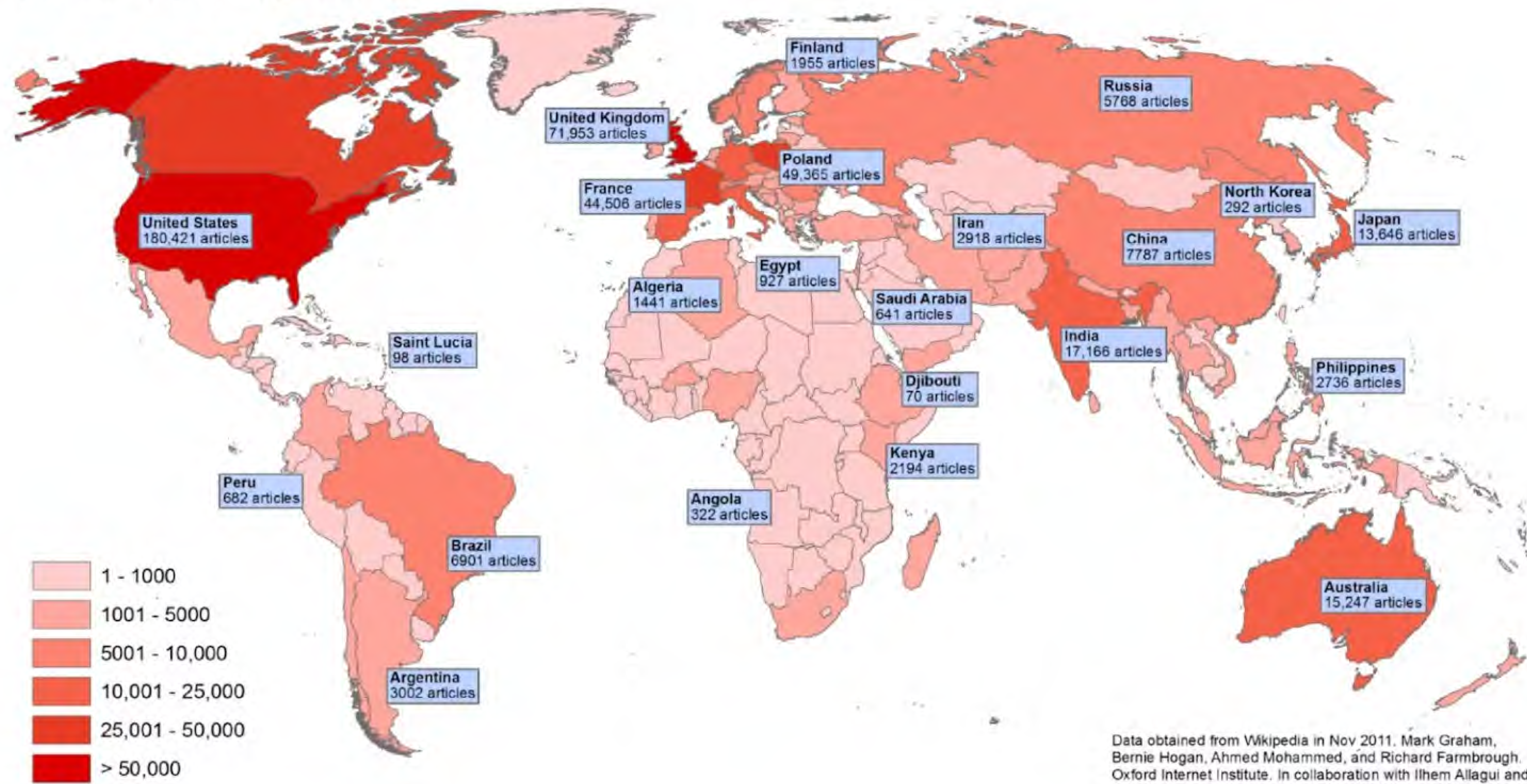




Source: Graham, M., Hale, S. A. and Stephens, M. (2011) *Geographies of the World's Knowledge*. London, Convoco! Edition.

Geotagged Wikipedia Articles (in English)

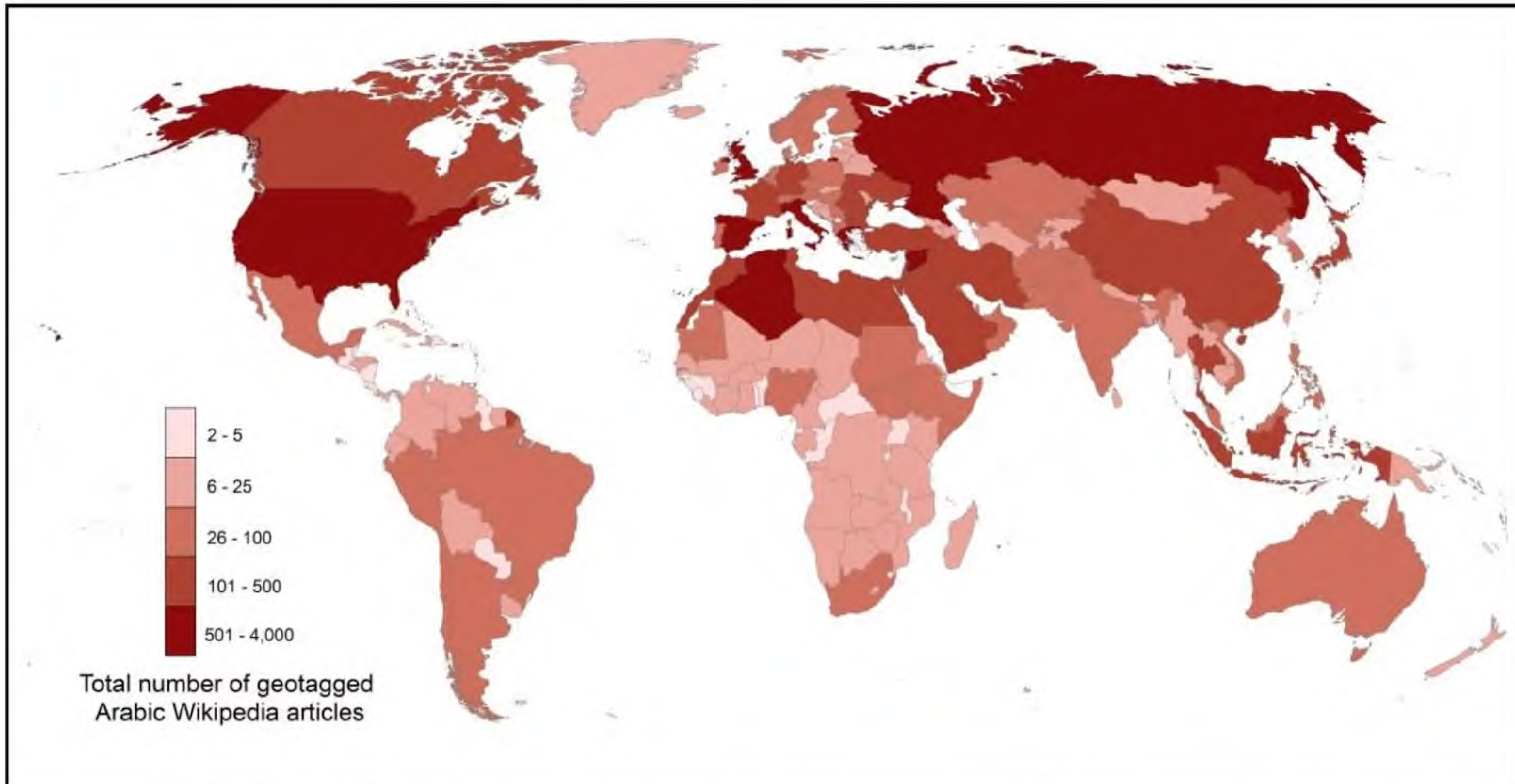
Total Number of Geotagged Articles
per Country in English Wikipedia



Data obtained from Wikipedia in Nov 2011. Mark Graham, Bernie Hogan, Ahmed Mohammed, and Richard Farmbrough. Oxford Internet Institute. In collaboration with Ilhem Allagui and Ali Fihida. Funding provided by the IDRC. More info: Mark Graham (t: @geoplace) or www.oii.ox.ac.uk/vis

Source: Mark Graham (www.zerogeography.net)

Geotagged Wikipedia articles (in Arabic)



E.g. see work of OII's Digital Inequality Group: <http://dig.oii.ox.ac.uk/2018/07/30/knowledge-equity-and-spatial-justice-on-wikiped>



UNSETTLING ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

ENGAGING
CRITICAL, COMMUNAL,
AND DIGITAL
ARCHIVES

EDITED BY

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ROMEO GARCÍA,

CAITLIN BURNS ALLEN,

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“...we contend that archives need unsettling. Archives are never neutral instruments of storing information, but rather, always already involve knowledge production, and hence, involve the literacies, images, and rhetorics of power...”

Kirsch et al. (2023, p.7)



How might critical archives expand the knowledges in your subject / classroom?

E.g. questioning and retelling:

- Origin stories about subjects?
- Achievements of individual heroes?
- Typologies and hierarchies of countries?

How might critical archives expand the knowledges in your subject / classroom?

Questions and comments

0 questions
0 upvotes



Resources

- <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/special-collections>
- <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops#/course/OXFORDBODL/ISKILL0089> (previous courses and materials are made available)
- [**Discovering archives and modern manuscripts at the Bodleian Libraries**](#)
- World Bibliographical Information System (WBIS):
https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=44OXF_INST:SOLO&search_scope=OXF_COLLECTIONS&tab=Everything&docid=alma991025213936907026&context=L