

## Sea Paths to Everywhere

Just as the portable clock made the world's time accessible to everybody, when atlases became portable, millions could share a view of the world's space.

WITHIN a few decades the European world concept would be transformed. The dominant Island of the Earth, a connected body of land comprising six-sevenths of the surface, was displaced by a dominant Ocean of the Earth, a connected body of water comprising two-thirds of the surface. **Never before had the arena of human experience been so suddenly or so drastically revised. And the earth became more than ever explorable.**

## Vasco Nunez de Balboa (1474-1517)

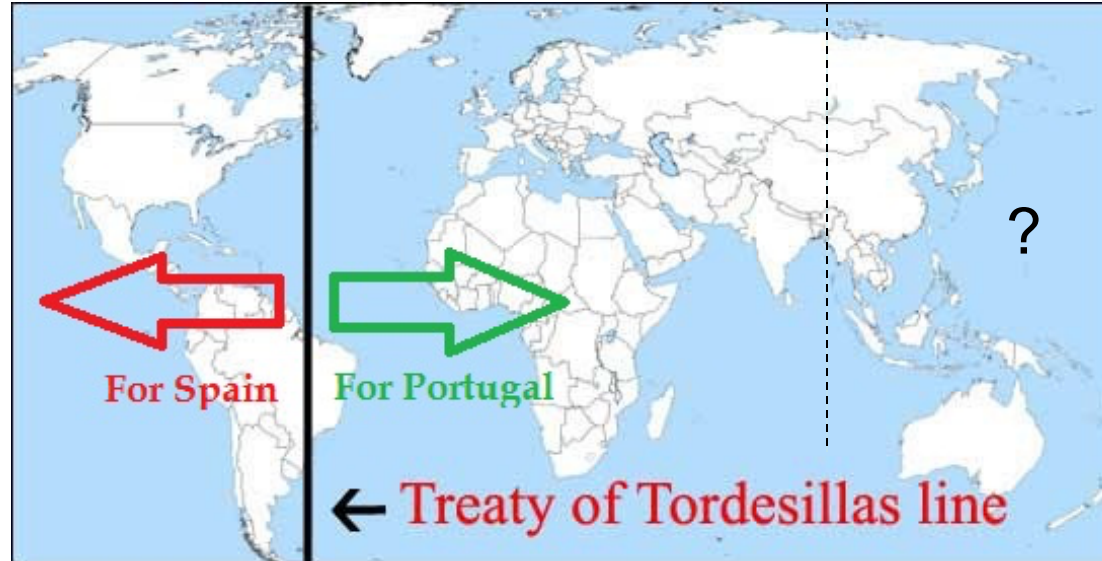
What is the matter, you Christian men, that you so greatly esteeme so little portion of gold more than your owne quietnesse . . . If your hunger of gold, bee so insatiable, that onely for the desire you have thereto, you disquiet so many nations, . . . I will shewe you a region flowing with golde, where you may satisfie your ravening appetites... . When you are passing over these mountains (poynting with his finger towarde the south mountaines) . . . you shall see another sea, where they sayle with shippes as bigge as yours, using both sayles and ores as you doe, although the men be naked as we are.



At once the alert Balboa selected one hundred and ninety of his own men and several hundred native guides and porters and set out to follow this lead

The dark recesses of the tropical rain forest were like nothing they had known before. Later explorers found that Balboa's route still taxed them to the limits of courage and endurance.

Another four days' trek took them to the shore of this newly discovered ocean. In a climactic gesture, Balboa, **wearing his armor and carrying his unsheathed sword, waded into the surf, raised the banner of Castile, and for his Catholic sovereigns formally took possession of this Mar del Sur, the Southern Sea. He took possession, too, "of all that sea and the countries bordering on it" by a brief ceremonial ride in dugout canoes borrowed from the local Indians.**



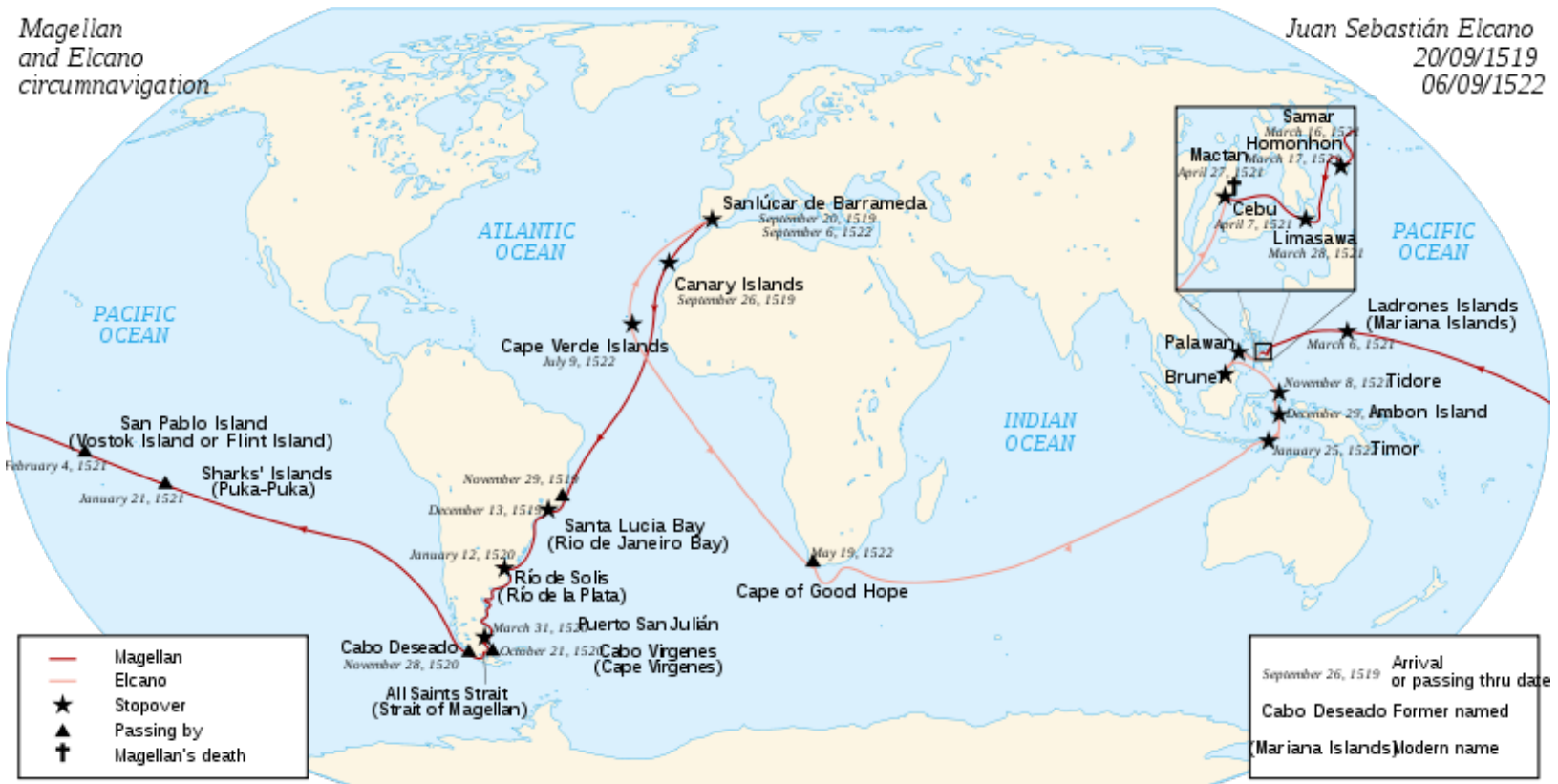
Nobody yet knew what intervened between this new Fourth Part of the World and Asia. Spanish hopes were still high that Ptolemy, Marco Polo, and Columbus had been correct in extending the Asian continent so far eastward. Perhaps it was only a short hop, maybe along a chain of still to be discovered Asiatic islands, from America to the East Indies.

The Spanish Emperor Charles V naturally hoped that the Spice Islands would prove to be on the eastern, Spanish side of the dividing line when it was extended on that Asian half of the globe. **Why not send out an expedition to mark off that line and then assert Spanish claims? Here was Magellan's opportunity.**

# Magellan (pp 259-265)



Magellan's feat, by any measure—moral, intellectual, or physical— would excel even that of Gama or Columbus or Vespucci. He would face rougher seas, negotiate more treacherous passages, and find his way across a broader ocean. He commanded a more mutinous crew, yet managed his more difficult command firmly and humanely.



## Straits of Magellan (p 263)



The Portuguese tried in vain to stop Magellan's voyage. But after a year and a half spent outfitting the expedition, Magellan departed on September 20, 1519.

For his round-the-world voyage he set out with five barely seaworthy ships varying in burden from 75 to one 125 tons.

After Magellan's death in Asia, the expedition was not abandoned. The Concepción had become unseaworthy and was burned. The Trinidad, also judged incapable of the journey back to Spain, attempted to make an attempt to cross the Pacific to Panama, and returned to the East Indies. The semi-seaworthy Victoria, under Juan Sebastián del Cano, took the western route around the Cape of Good Hope. To the already familiar trials of hunger, thirst, and scurvy now was added the hostility of the Portuguese, who imprisoned nearly half of Del Cano's crew when they put in at the Cape Verde Islands in the Atlantic. On September 8, 1522, only twelve days less than three years from the day of their departure, a feeble remnant of the original two hundred fifty, eighteen ship-worn men, arrived at Seville.

## Secrecy and Nation States

Prince Henry the Navigator and his successors did everything in their power to establish and **preserve a monopoly over the commerce with their newly discovered coasts of Africa**. This meant not letting out the word about where the places were and how to reach them.

When King Manuel developed his plans for a pepper monopoly in 1504, he ordered that all the navigating information be kept secret. **"It is impossible to get a chart of the voyage,"** an Italian agent, **"because the King has decreed the death penalty for anyone sending one abroad."**

The Spanish, trying to enforce a similar policy, **kept their official charts in a lockbox secured with two locks and two keys**, one held by the major (Amerigo Vespucci was the first), the other by the cosmographer major. Fearing that their official maps would be deliberately corrupted or would not include the latest authentic information, in 1508 the government created a master chart, the Padrón Real, to be supervised by a commission of the ablest pilots

Private trading companies prepared their own "secret" atlases. The Dutch East India Company, for example, employing the best cartographers in the Netherlands, put together for the exclusive use of the company some one hundred eighty maps, charts, and views showing the best routes around Africa, to India, to China, and to Japan.

Such a collection, long suspected to exist, did not come to light until years later in the library of Prince Eugene of Savoy in Vienna.

Official government charts, generally speaking, did not become available to the public until what they contained was already common knowledge.

## The role of the printing press..

It was from a quite unexpected quarter that the policy of secrecy would be defeated. Not by spies or treacherous pilots-major like Sebastian Cabot. But by a new technology that created a new kind of merchandise. After the arrival of the printing press geographic knowledge could be conveniently packaged and profitably sold.

THE printing press also had a daemonic power to open the world and diffuse knowledge of discoveries in convenient packages. Merely by its power to multiply the product, **the printing press would be a champion of freedom**, providing myriad unstoppable channels for dangerous facts and ideas, sending out countless items which could not be traced or withdrawn. **Once the printing press had done its work, there was no force on earth, no law or edict, that could retrieve the message.**

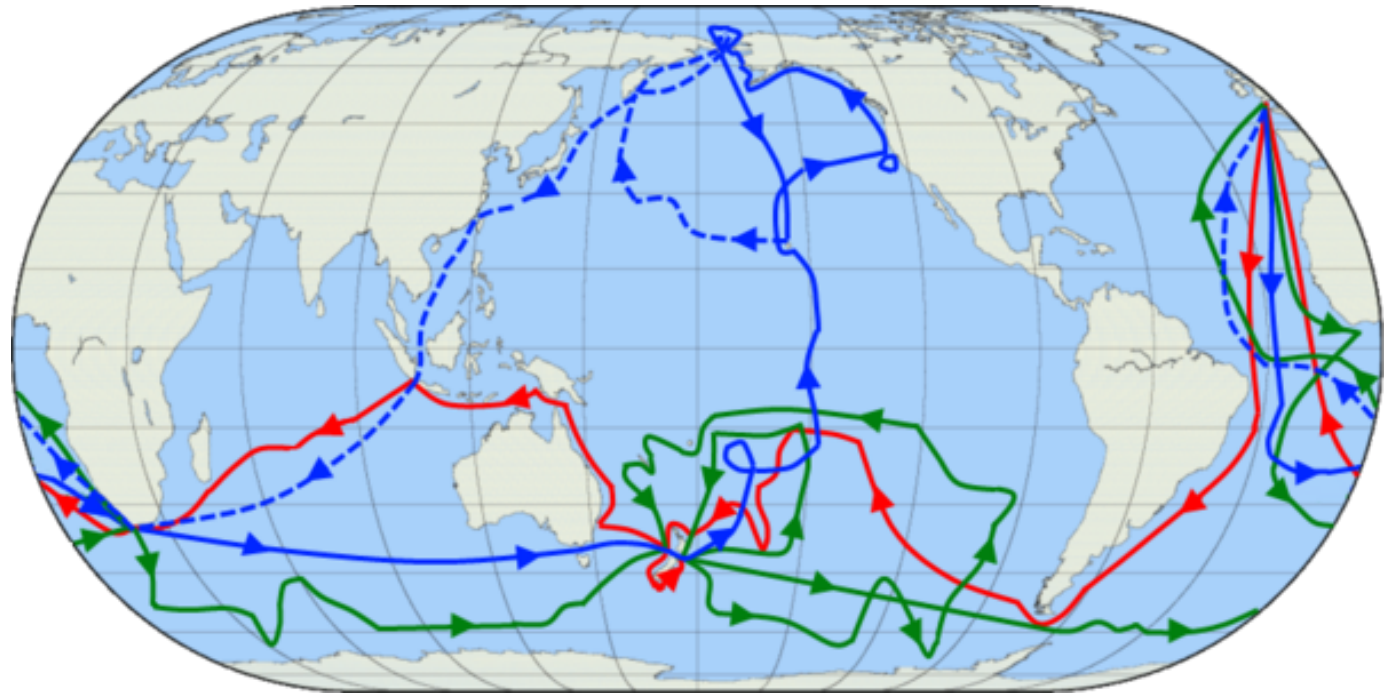


Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) unwittingly produced a new kind of book, the first modern geographical atlas. With the help of his friend Mercator, he collected the best maps. The Picture of the World (**Theatrum Orbis Terrarum**), the first modern atlas, came of the Antwerp press on May 20, **1570**, after ten years of work.

## The Ardors of Negative Discovery (pp 278-289)



James Cook



Captain Cook (3 major voyages)

To succeed in negative discovery—to prove that some mythical entity really did not exist—was far more exacting and more exhausting than to succeed in finding a known objective. The westward sea passage from Europe to Asia, which Columbus sought, was a path to a known goal. So long as the existence and precise location of the Great South Land were legendary, the explorer had to scour all conceivable places, and in fact would have to circumnavigate the globe, before he dared assert that it would never be discovered.

A great deal of the interest in Cook's **first voyage** came from the rich haul of specimens that the naturalists had collected.

Cook's plan this time (**second voyage**) was wholly directed at solving the problem of the Great South Land. For this purpose the voyage had to be a full circumnavigation of the earth at the southernmost possible latitude. His last trip had come into the Pacific by way of Cape Horn. This time he proposed to try the other way, down the Atlantic past the Cape of Good Hope, then, in the farthest southern latitude he could manage, proceed eastward all around the South Polar regions of the globe. If there really was a southern continent reaching up into inhabitable zones, he could not possibly miss it.

In this field we counted Ninety Seven Ice Hills or Mountains, many of them vastly large. . . . I will not say it was impossible anywhere to get in among this Ice, but I will assert that the bare attempting of it would be a very dangerous enterprise and what I believe no man in my situation would have thought of. **I whose ambition leads me not only farther than any other man has been before me, but as far as I think it is possible for man to go,** was not sorry at meeting with this interruption, as it in some measure relieved us from the dangers and hardships, inseparable with the Navigation of the southern Polar regions. Since therefore we could not proceed one Inch farther South, no other reason need be assigned for Our tacking and stretching back to the North, being at that time in the Latitude of 71 degrees 10 min South, Longitude 106 degrees 54 min West.

The British Admiralty had still another, more focused assignment for Cook on the frontiers of myth, hope, and geography. Was there really a Northwest Passage?

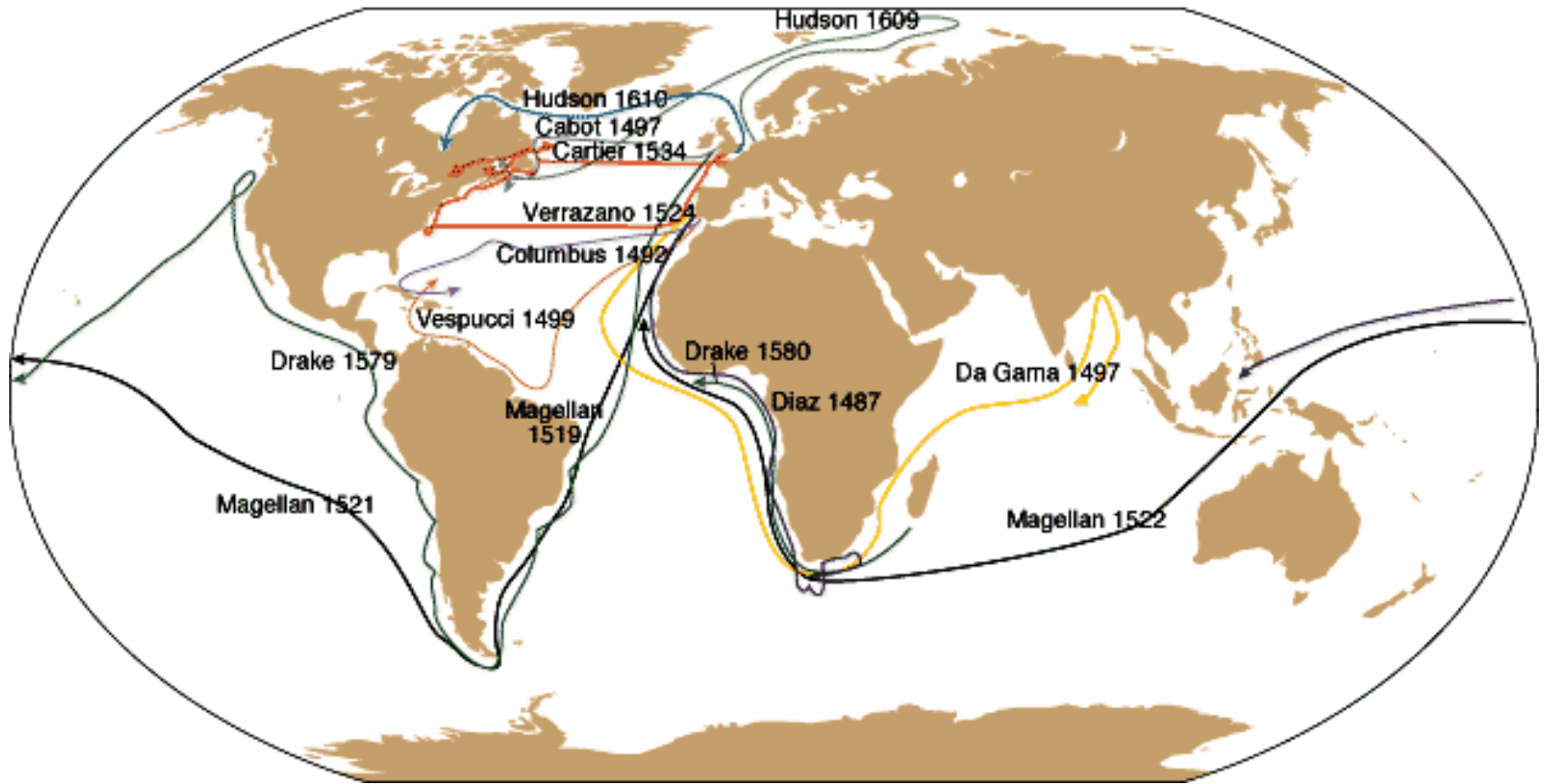
Within less than a year after his return from his second voyage, Cook was off on (**voyage 3**) this quest for a passage that might (or might not) be there.

Cook's is recognized for what he did to improve the health and save the lives of men at sea. He did more than any other explorer in the sailing days of long ocean voyages to cure the curse of seamen—**scurvy**. The lethargy and anemia, bleeding gums, loosened teeth, stiffness of the joints, and slow wound healing were vividly described by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." On Vasco da Gama's voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, scurvy is said to have taken a hundred of his hundred and seventy men.

He enforced cleanliness on board by regularly inspecting the men's hands, and he punished the dirty handed. The result of his experiments with oranges, lemons, and their juices, along with sauerkraut, and miscellaneous items like the onions of Madeira, the wild celery and "scurvy grass" was quite remarkable. On his first voyage he lost men by accidents and other ailments, but appears not to have lost a single one from scurvy, and his record on the second voyage was just as impressive

Today, we struggle with space radiation, loss of white blood cells and bone thinning

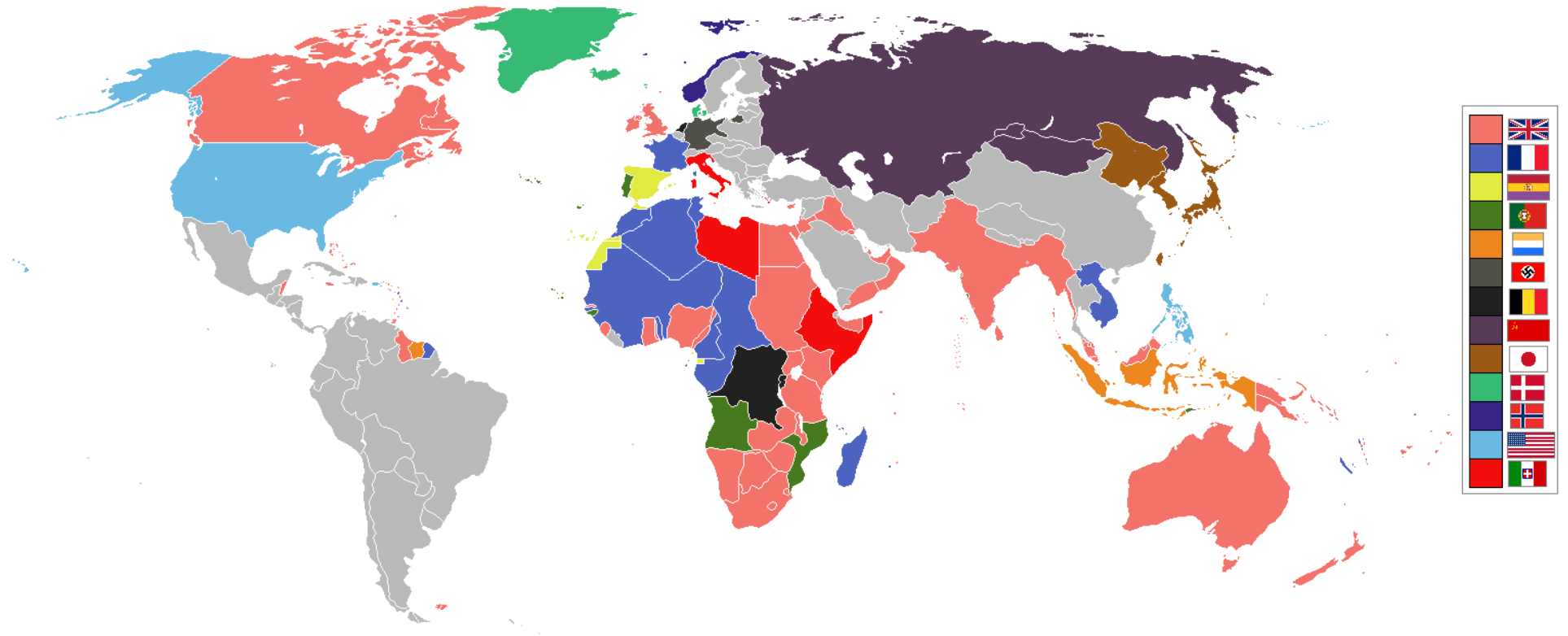
# Comparison of some other major voyages



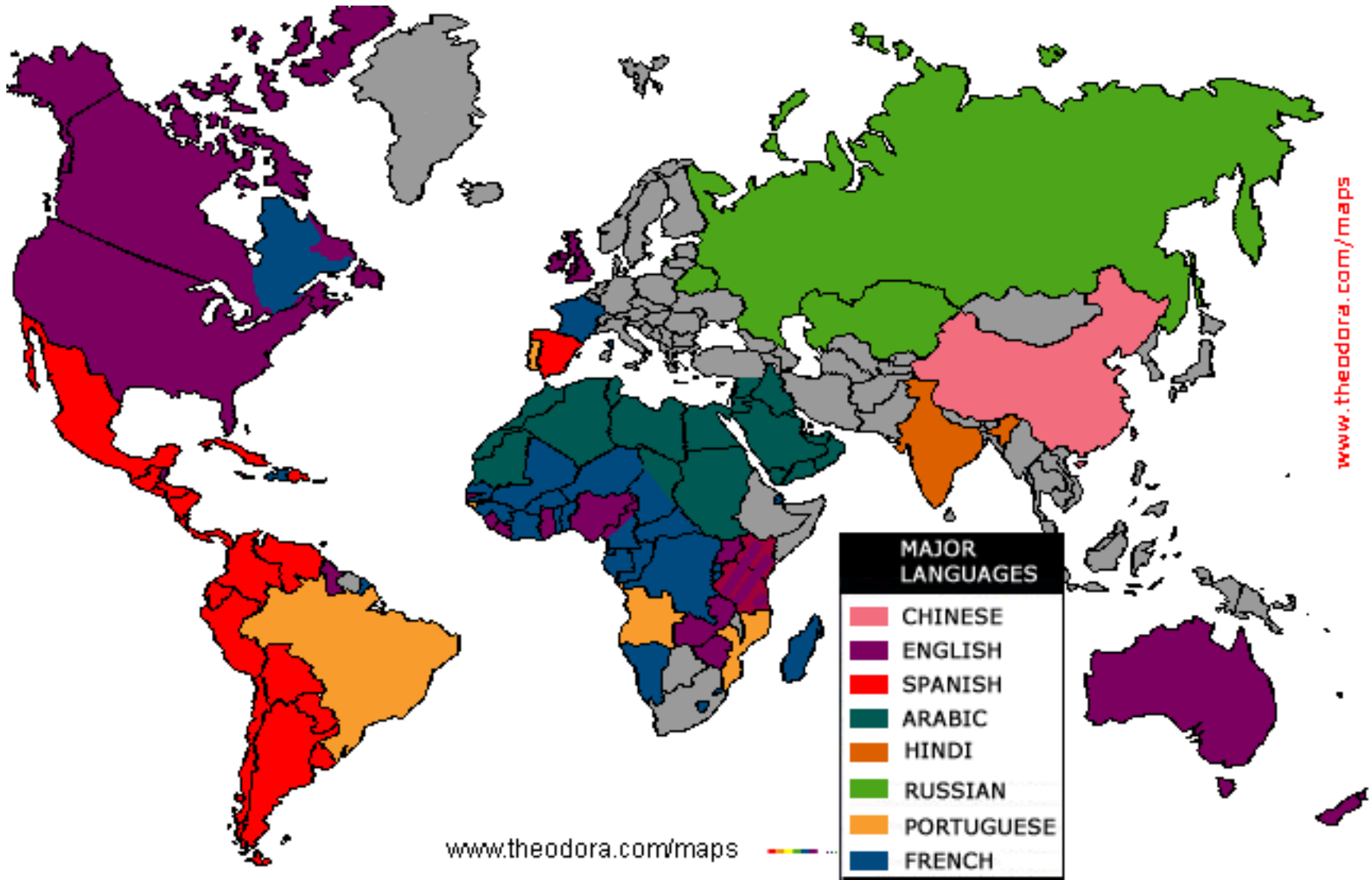
# circa 1750



# Colonies of World circa 1900

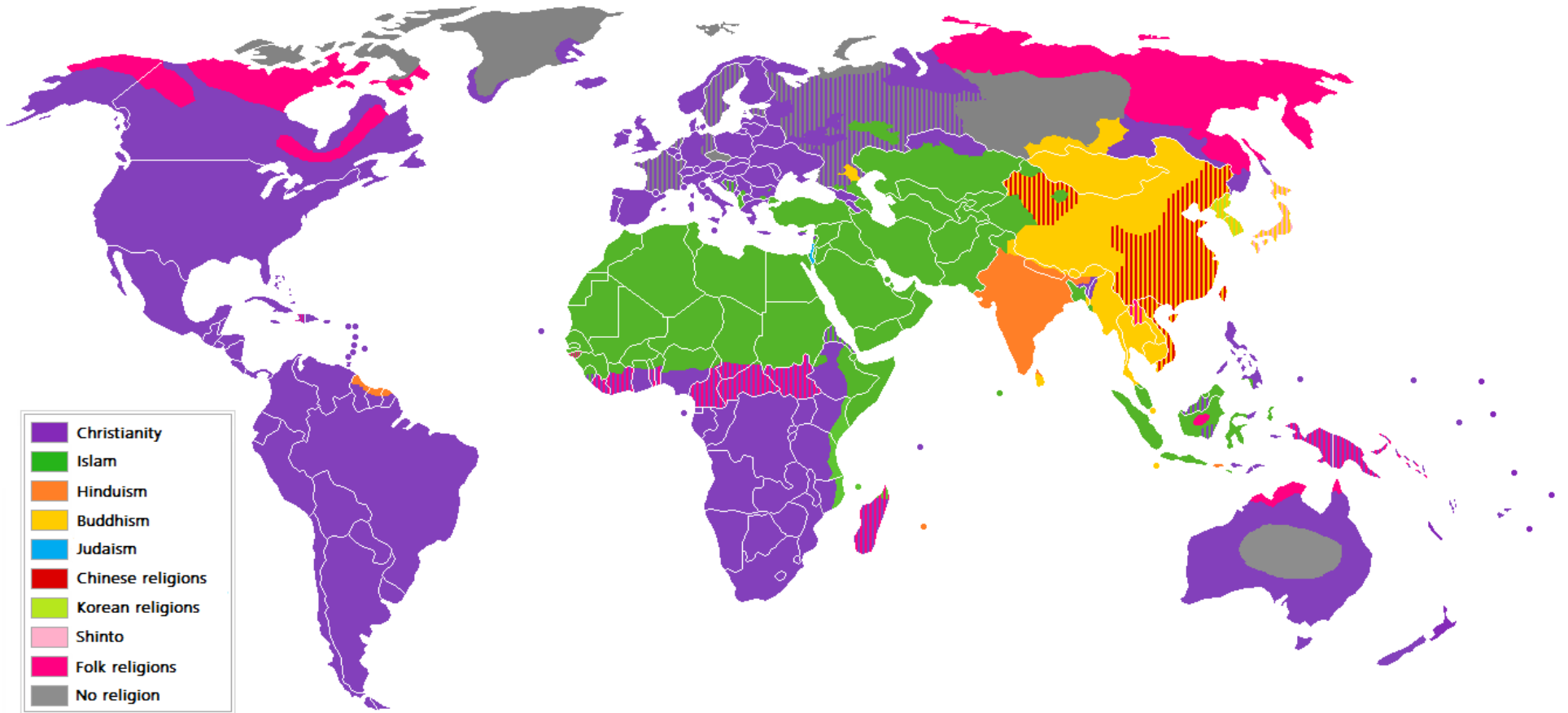


# Most common languages of the World



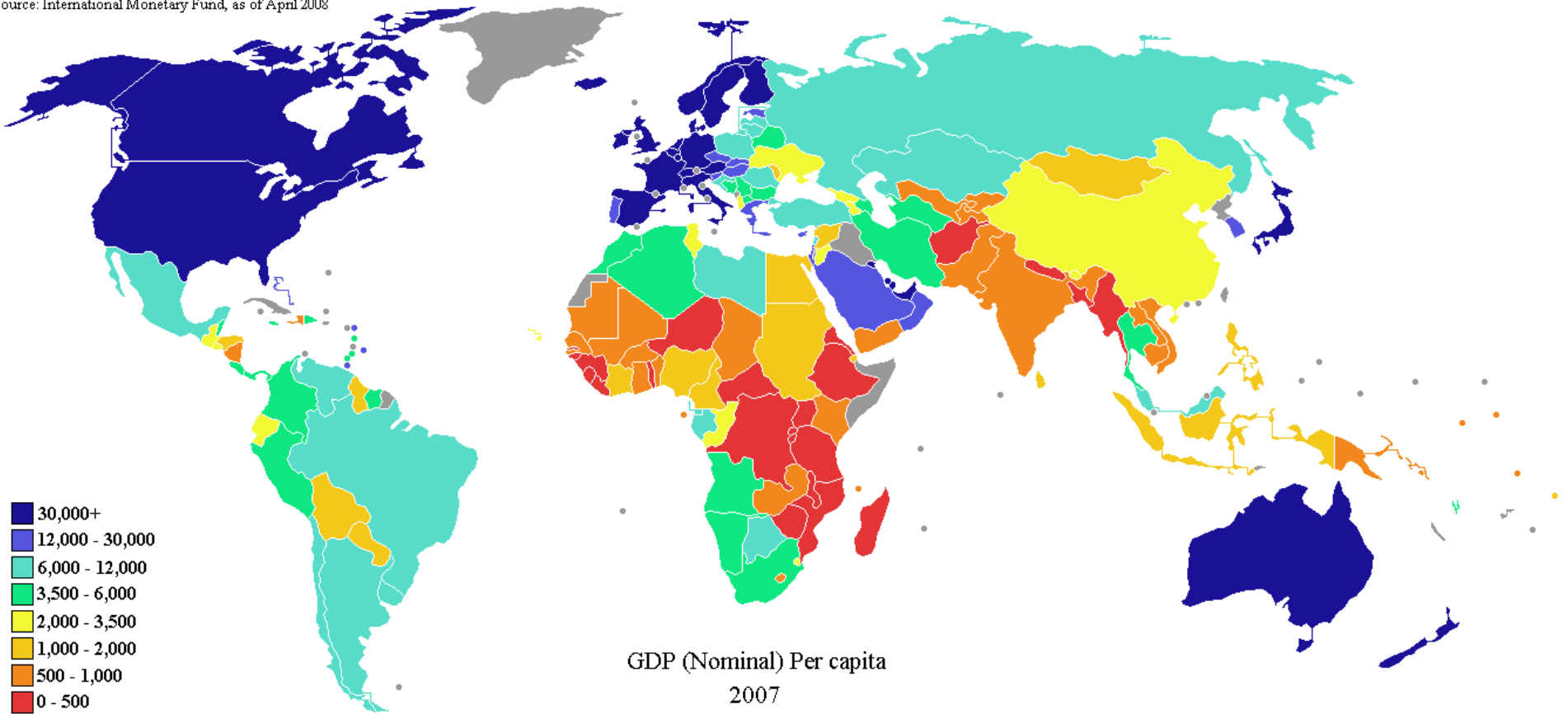
# Most common religions of the World

The Religions of the World



# Global Economic Wealth

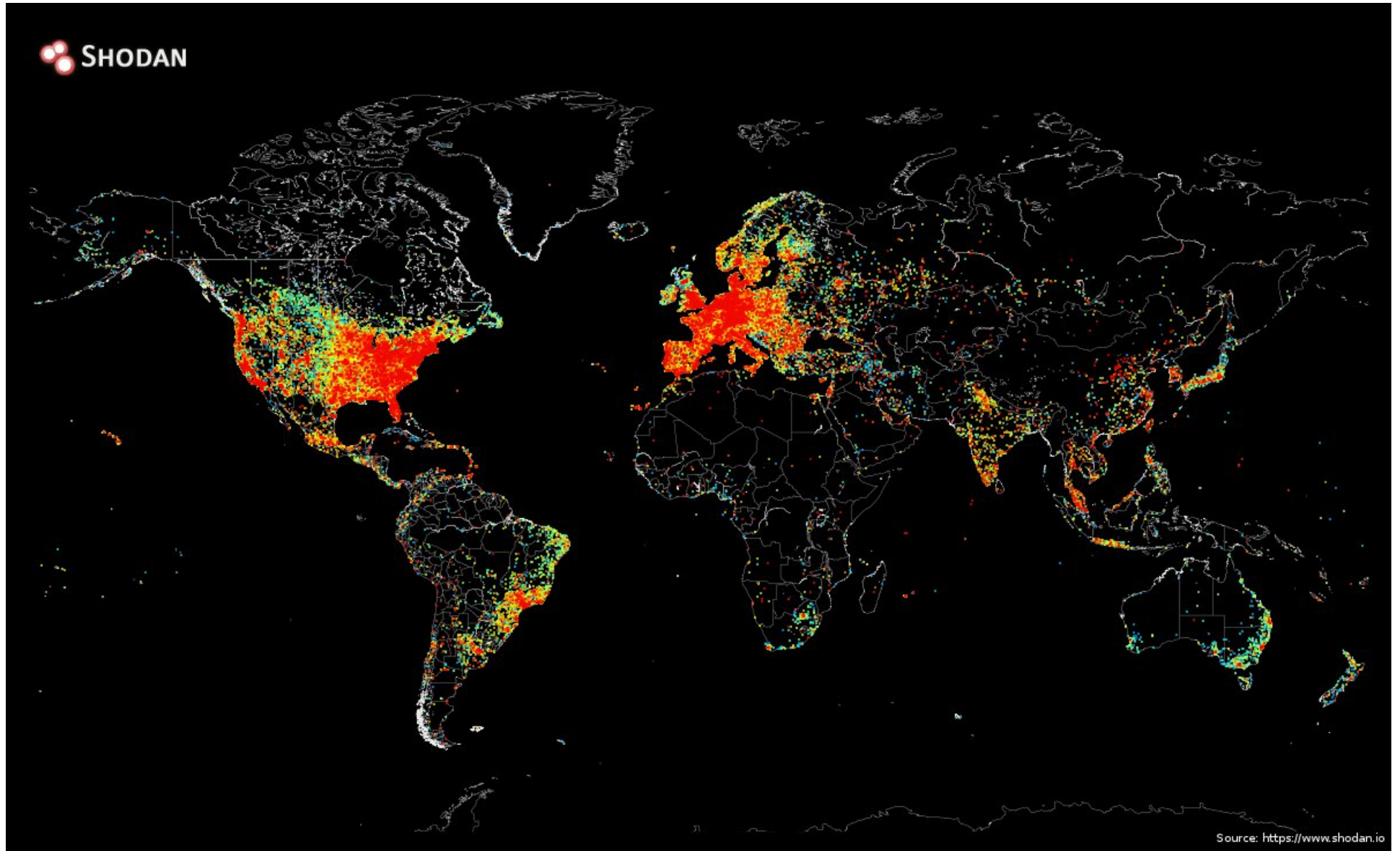
Source: International Monetary Fund, as of April 2008



# THE GLOBAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



# Internet Connectivity



## **NEXT STOP: THE FINAL FRONTIER**

What humanity will be represented in different regions of the solar system?  
On the asteroids? On the planets? Inner vs. Outer solar system?

What countries or coalitions of countries?

What languages?

What religions?

What economic systems?

How will wealth and resources be **redistributed** on Earth?

How will the MAPS change?

Consider the well-thought-through and plausible scenario of the world of China had NOT withdrawn...

[http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/Easternized\\_World](http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/Easternized_World)

