

# From Ancient Mariner to Modern Seafarer a search for age-old heroes on new-found shores

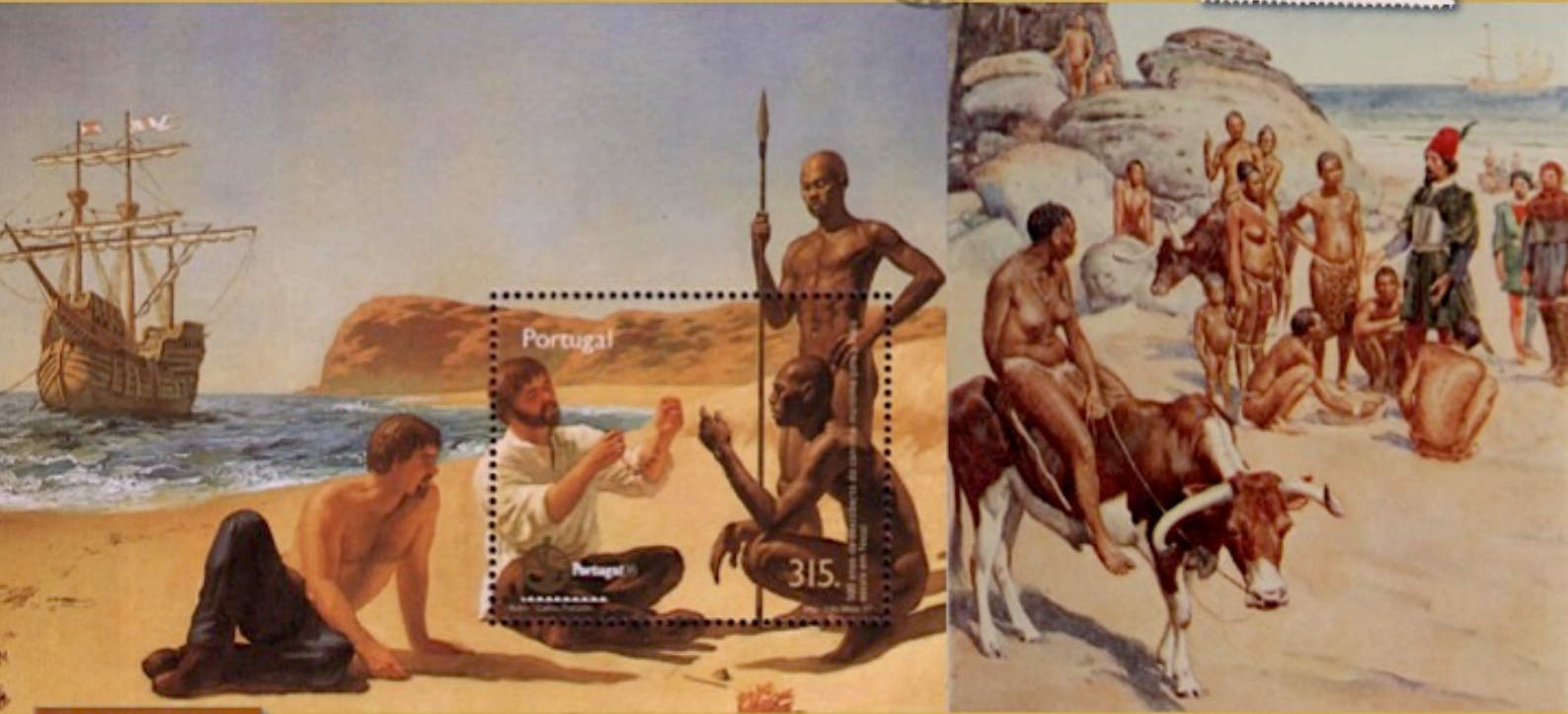


Nicolaas Vergunst

Oceans and Shores CHAM 2017

This paper traces the recurrence of several Classical themes in an age of Portuguese oceanic expansion. It was written for the third CHAM (Centre for Overseas History) conference at the University of Lisbon, 12–15 July 2017, and draws on research from the author's book, a novel, entitled *Knot of Stone: the day that changed South Africa's history*.

# Oceans and Shores



CHAM 2017

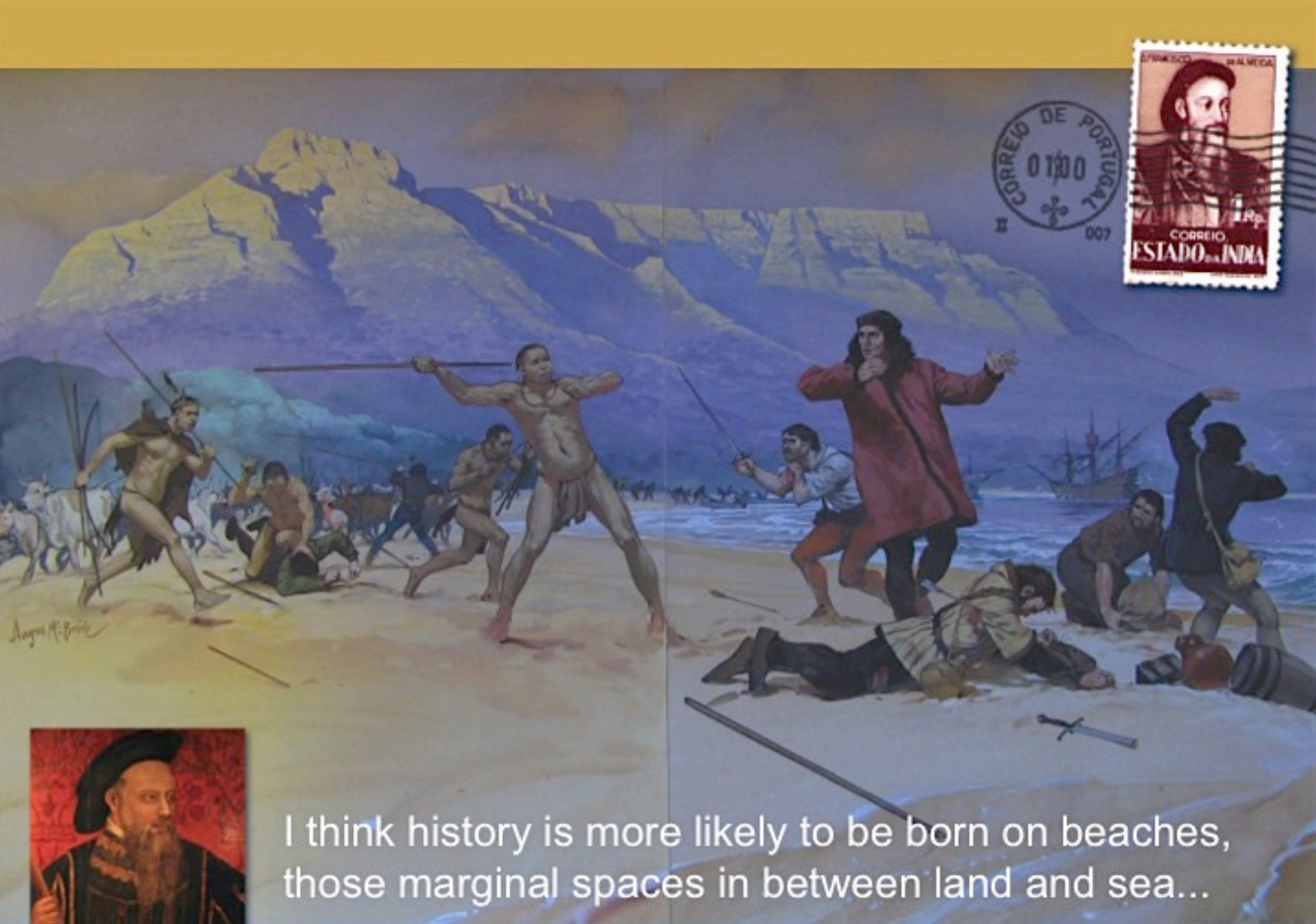
The III CHAM conference theme, Oceans and Shores, takes me back three decades, to 1987–1988, when I wrote my first essay for a literary competition entitled ‘Portuguese discoveries and the consequences for Africa’.<sup>1</sup> The contest coincided with the Dias 88 quincentenary and was adjudicated by scholars from the universities of Lisbon and Cape Town. I saw my essay as an opportunity to present new insights into the death of Dias’ compatriot, Viceroy D’Almeida, and to revisit its knock-on effect in the land of my birth.<sup>2</sup> Thirty years later I find myself still writing about first encounters on the beach—that intertidal zone between land and sea—where local and classical interpretations continue to wash up against each other. It seems the problems we face today are no less sombre, no less sensitive and no less ambivalent than they were decades or even centuries ago.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nicolaas Vergunst, ‘The Death of De Almeida: false facts or fictitious fate?’, unpublished essay, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> For a reconstruction of Almeida’s death during the first recorded battle (and ritual execution) in South African history see *Knot of Stone: the day that changed South Africa’s history*, Bury St Edmunds, Arena Books, 2011. For a quick overview watch *Knot of Stone: historical parallels, recurring patterns*, [online video clip], 2011, <https://vimeo.com/198889203>

<sup>3</sup> As South African literary critic Malvern van Wyk Smith then aptly stated, “while it would be foolish and abject to deprive Dias and his successors of their achievement, their vision and their courage, it would be equally foolish and perverse not to recognise that Dias’ *padrão* was a symbol of conquest and must primarily, if not exclusively, be seen as such by those who regard themselves as its victims.” *Shades of Adamastor*, Grahamstown, Rhodes University, 1988, p.xiv.





I think history is more likely to be born on beaches,  
those marginal spaces in between land and sea...

Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language...*, 1992

The untimely death of Dom Francisco d'Almeida remains an enigma: was it an ambush, a mutiny or an assassination? Whatever the verdict, it has been called “one of the greatest tragedies in the history of Portugal” because the Portuguese failed to seize the Cape of Good Hope, but took Mozambique and Angola instead.<sup>4</sup> As Greg Denning says:

“I think history is more likely to be born on beaches, those marginal spaces in between land and sea... where everything is relativised a little, turned around, where tradition is as much invented as handed down, where otherness is both a new discovery and a reflection of something old.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Victor de Kock, *By Strength of Heart*, Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1953, p.28. Had it not been for this tragedy, Portugal may have controlled the entire sub-continent, from the mouth of the Congo River to the Mozambique Channel, potentially making of it a second Brazil. After Almeida's tragic death, king Manuel forbade Portuguese ships from calling at the Cape (unless in dire need) and so a colony emerged under very different circumstances—submitting to the influence of pragmatic Dutch Protestants, anti-Catholic Huguenots and entrepreneurial English industrialists. For more background read 'Why South Africa isn't Brazil', *Knot of Stone*, [web blog], 19 August 2011, <http://www.knotofstone.com/2011/08/why-south-africa-isnt-brazil>

<sup>5</sup> Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.177.



Arms and the Heroes, who from Lisbon's shore,  
Thro' Seas where sail was never spread before...

Louis de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, 1572



Let's begin with the opening lines of *Os Lusíadas*.<sup>6</sup> Epic poetry emboldens men of action and inspires a nation to greater deeds by way of good examples. To this end, diverse heroes, dramatic battles and daring voyages became the leitmotifs of Camões' national epic. He believed that great poetry, especially great epic poetry, should improve the moral marrow of a people and promote their sense of divine historical purpose. According to him, the gods favoured the plucky Portuguese.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Canto I, trans. by William Julius Mickle, 1776.

<sup>7</sup> *The Lusíadas (Sons of Lusus)*, 1572, is no history but an allegory focusing on Vasco da Gama's god-ordained sea voyage to India. It describes the adventures and fortunes of all who doubled the Cape, including the prophecy that Almeida would not pass this threshold on his return from India, Canto V, 45.





What wars they wag'd, what seas, what dangers pass'd,  
What glorious empire crown'd their toils at last...

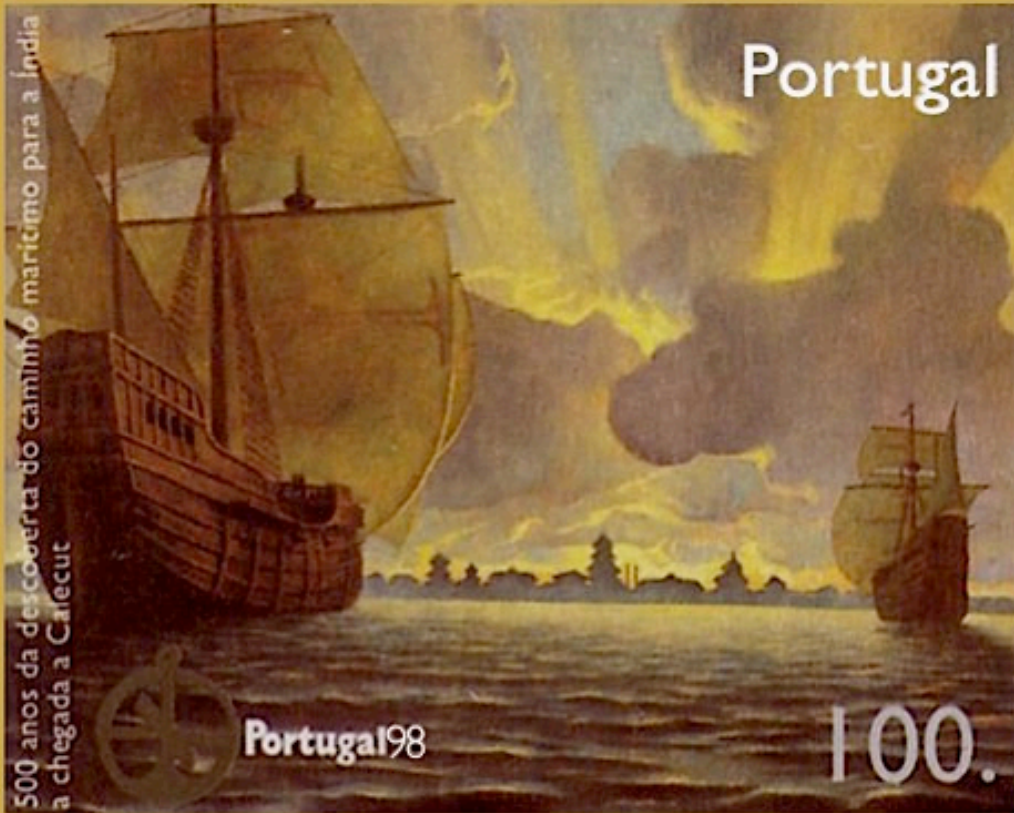
Louís de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, 1572



The idea that poetry, like drama, brings out the best in us wasn't new, of course, but came from ancient Greece where Aristotle had argued that poetics expresses our highest human values and noblest aspirations.<sup>8</sup> For the next two millennia poetry was seen as superior to history—and thus worthy of greater praise—because historical writing only tells us what we once were and not what we may yet become. In this regard *Os Lusíadas* became the founding myth for an emergent Portuguese nation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle's *De Poetica*, c.335BCE, is the earliest-surviving western treatise on literary theory and includes a discourse on epic poetry, lyric poetry and the dithyramb.

<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Virgil's *Aeneid* served as the foundation legend of Rome and the founding myth of Spanish America.



What Kings, what Heroes of my native land,  
Thunder'd on Asia's and on Afric's strand.

Louís de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, 1572

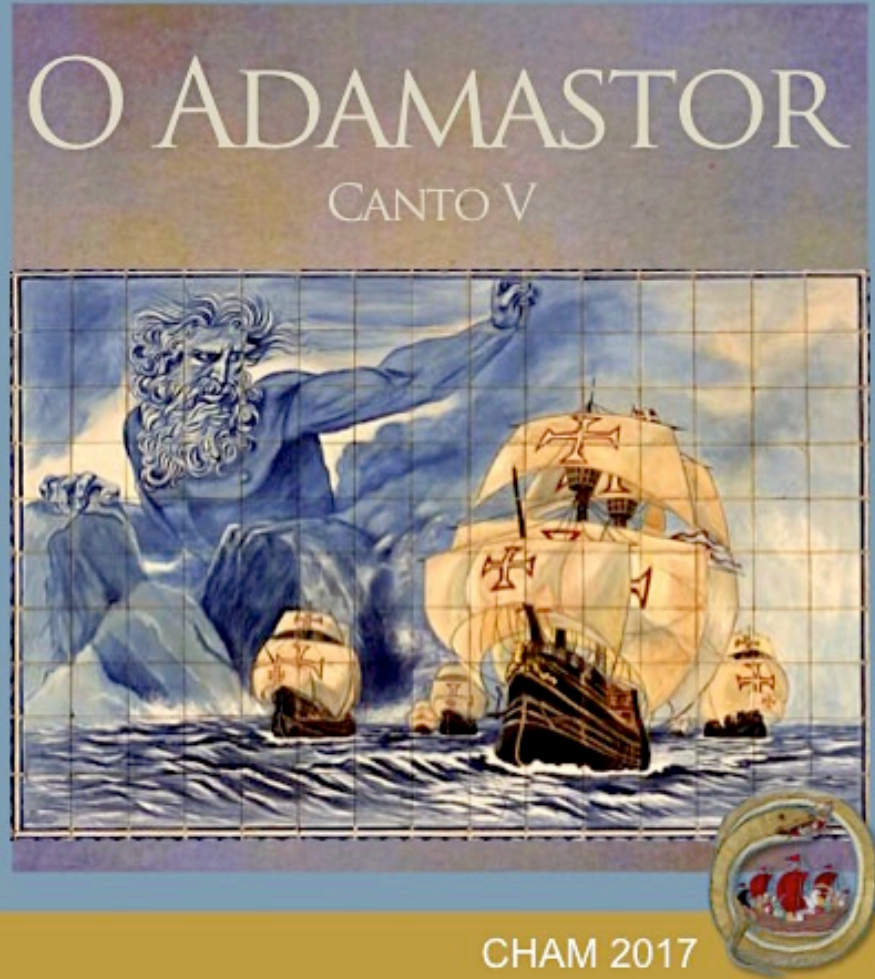
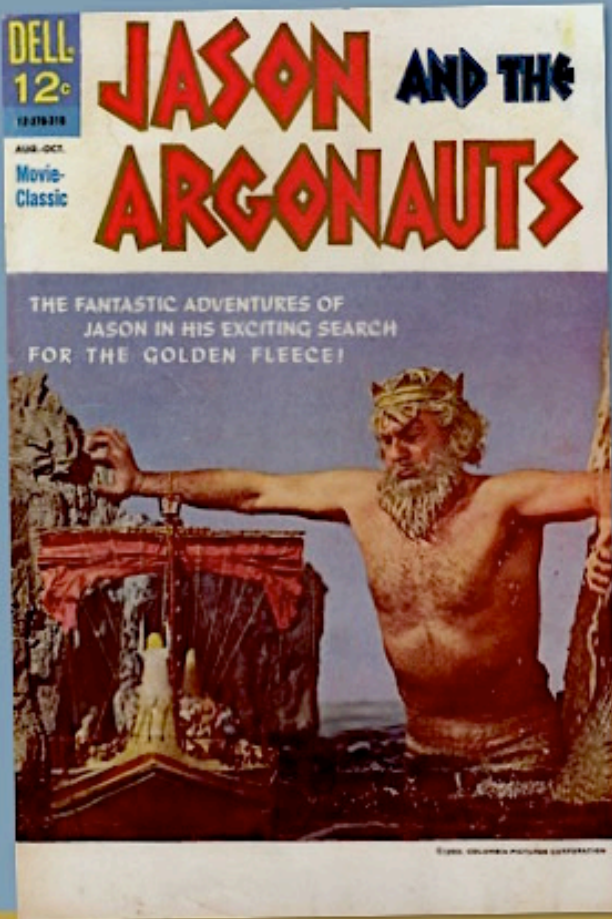


While the outbound journey to the Indies began and ended at opposite ends of the world, modern history was born where Native and Stranger, indigene and interloper first met. Camões, however, offers up more references to the glories of Greece and Rome than to all the splendours of Asia or Africa seen en route to the East.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Classical themes and subjects were popular in 16thC art and literature, not only in Portugal, but all over Europe, and used to instill civilised virtues in contemporary society. See John Berger, 'Introduction', in Howard Daniel, *Encyclopedia of Themes and Subjects in Painting*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1971.



# Evocations and Continuities



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There are some clear historical parallels between the founding of an ancient Greek state and the rise of a Portuguese nation. Both Jason the Argonaut and Henry the Navigator were princes who sent their seafarers to the ends of the world and achieved what others thought impossible: they made the promise of return a reality.

Moreover, Henry's captains saw themselves as new-age argonauts and, once initiated into the Order of Christ (*Ordem de Cristo*), were enrolled as neo-Templar knights—as Knights of the Sea on a renewed crusade.<sup>11</sup>

This brings us to our first motif, namely World's End.

<sup>11</sup> Cyril Coetzee, 'An Alchemical Passage to India', in Ivan Vladislavić (ed.), *Adamastor: Inventions of Africa in a South African Painting*, Johannesburg, University of the Wtwatersrand, 2000.

# 1. World's End



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As a neo-Templar knight, Bartolomeu Dias was nicknamed “the Captain of the End”<sup>12</sup> after he brought his men safely back from earth’s farthest corner, from the southern hemisphere whose limit was still unknown. Ironically, Dias had to return after his crew rebelled and refused to sail on, believing warmer waters signalled the precipitous End-of-the-Earth. Today we recognise this as the warm Agulhas current that sweeps down East Africa’s coast.

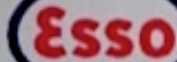
We also know that sub-Saharan Africa was neither peripheral nor isolated but complexly bound to the Indian Ocean Rim and Atlantic trade routes, to the balance of power between Asia and Europe, and to age-old relationships between a mystical East and a rational West. Perhaps this explains why Africa, rather than Britain, was seen as the true home of the Grail.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Fernando Pessoa, ‘Epitaph of Bartolomeu Dias’, in *English Poems*, Lisbon, Olisipo, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> The history of the African continent, inseparable from Europe since the 15thC, is bound up with epic voyages of discovery, world trade routes and the quest for a Terrestrial Paradise—including the legendary realm of Prester John, last guardian of the Grail in Africa. According to the Austrian philosopher and historian Walter Johannes Stein, “The history of the Grail is the history of the world. And the history of the world is the history of East and West,” 1928. *The Ninth Century: World History in the Light of the Holy Grail*, London, Temple Lodge Press, 1991.



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Another parallel can be drawn between the Age of Discoveries and the Space Age, between earth's unexplored oceans and the oceans of space, between Columbus' first epic voyage and NASA's first moon landing when, as William Safire then put it, "Mother Earth dared send two of her sons into the unknown".<sup>14</sup> Safire was an American columnist and speechwriter who, two days before the historic Apollo landing, drafted a statement for President Nixon to read in the event of a disaster.

<sup>14</sup> 'In Event of Moon Disaster', unannounced presidential statement, 20 July 1969.



“In ancient days, men looked at stars  
and saw their heroes in the constellations.  
In modern times, we do much the same,  
but our heroes are epic men of flesh and blood.”

William Safire, *In Event of Moon Disaster*, 1969



Safire’s statement was never broadcast but remains, to my mind, a most poignant comparison between the heroes of old and those of our own era: “In ancient days, men looked at stars and saw their heroes in the constellations. In modern times, we do much the same, but our heroes are epic men of flesh and blood.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> William Safire, ‘In Event of Moon Disaster’, 20 July 1969. See also Roger Bruns, *Almost History*, Hyperion, 2000.





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We now know that classical astrology was fixed between the time of the Argonauts and the Trojan War because, according to Sir Isaac Newton, the Argonauts were placed in our night sky and not the heroes of the Trojan War.<sup>16</sup> While known as *Argo Navis* (Ship Argo), the constellation was found low on the southern Mediterranean sky.<sup>17</sup> 'The Ship' was visible in spring and appeared to sail westward, skimming across the southern horizon, as if following the souls of the departed on their journey west.

The link between argonaut and astronaut, seafarer and spaceman was reinforced by Safire's recommendation that, once NASA broke off communication with the ill-fated crew, a clergyman should conduct the same procedure as a burial at sea, commending their souls to "the deepest of the deep". The lunar ship would be their grave.

<sup>16</sup> *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, London, 1728.

<sup>17</sup> Due to its enormous size and complexity, Argo Navis was divided into three star groups and formally abandoned after the International Astronomical Union (IAU) redefined the 88 modern constellations in 1930.



## 2. Underworld



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As a legacy of Antiquity, the warmer southern hemisphere was said to lead to the Underworld where the natural order was inverted and the heavens appeared to rotate in reverse, where sailors reported seeing the sun move across the sky on the “wrong” side of their boat.<sup>18</sup>

Like their predecessors, early Portuguese seafarers were trained to face terrible sea monsters and taught how to overcome their fear of the unknown. And since the voyage of the *Argo* symbolised a descent into the Underworld, a world of initiation, so did rounding the Cape of Good Hope, then revered as the Portal to the Indies.<sup>19</sup> The Cape was seen as a sacred portal between the Atlantic and Indian oceans, a threshold between the Occident and the Orient, the familiar and the exotic, between Self and Other.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Herodotus records how Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt, c.600BCE, sent Phoenician sailors beyond the Red Sea to see how far the land lay to the south. They returned three years later claiming to have circumnavigated the entire continent and that, far to the south, the sun’s path had been to their north, moving right to left, and had set in the northeast. While this reversal was unimaginable for those who’d never travelled below the equator—including Herodotus—it is a geo-physical truth we know today from our own experience. *The Histories*, Book IV, 42.

<sup>19</sup> An isiZulu creation myth describes the Cape, and particularly Table Mountain, as a giant called *Umlindi Wemingizimu* (Watcher of the South). For further reading see Nicolaas Vergunst, *Hoerikwaggo: Images of Table Mountain*, Cape Town, South African National Gallery, 2000, p.55.

<sup>20</sup> It was the master-geographer al-Biruni (973–1048) who first proposed that the Indian and Atlantic met below Africa. Arab navigators called the Indian Ocean *Kumārī Duāb*. From a Portuguese perspective, it was Prince Henry who recognised its importance, Dias who first crossed the great divide, Gama who added proof of the terminal point and Camoes who developed the symbolism for a great rite of passage.



### 3. Paradise



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Dias' passage around the foot of Africa was also seen as a rite of passage, west to east, from hardship to riches, from Tormentoso to Esperança, Torment to Hope, typecasting the Cape as a land of suffering and salvation, a place to purge the soul and attain enlightenment.<sup>21</sup> There could thus be no Cape of Good Hope without a Cape of Storms, no Paradise without a Purgatory.<sup>22</sup> It was Dante—that great admirer of Virgil—who invoked this when placing his Isle of Purgatory off to the South and his terrestrial Paradise on a flat-topped mountain rising above a watery transit.<sup>23</sup>

Africa was long seen to possess two aspects, Gemini-like, with one side brutish, the other refined and fabulous. The notion of a continent divided between “savage” and “worthy” inhabitants can be traced back to the 8thC BCE when, during the late New Kingdom, Egypt's ruling elite sought to distance itself from its African origins.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Malvern van Wyk Smith, *Shades of Adamastor*, Grahamstown, Rhodes University, 1988, pp1–8. See also Cyril Coetzee, 'An Alchemical Passage to India', in Ivan Vladislavić (ed.), *Adamastor: Inventions of Africa in a South African Painting*, Johannesburg, University of the Wtwatersrand, 2000, p.150.

<sup>22</sup> Nigel Penn, 'From penguins to prisoners: Robben Island 1488–1805', in Nigel Penn, Harriet Deacon and Neville Alexander (eds), *Robben Island: The Politics of Rock and Sand*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Inferno XXXI, 43–45. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, 1320, first printed as *La commedia* in 1472, describes his journey with Virgil to Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso. As an allegory of the soul's journey toward the divine, Dante's poem demonstrates contemporary knowledge of a spherical earth, the altered arc of the sun below the equator and the different stars visible in the southern hemisphere.

<sup>24</sup> The division between 'superior' and 'inferior' Africans laid the foundation for western racism and—via Homer, Herodotus, Pliny and Ptolemy—made its way into medieval art and literature. It became an obsession among Prince Henry and his successors, persisting into the 19thC under European explorers. See Malvern van Wyk Smith, *The First Ethiopians: The Image of Africa in the Early Mediterranean World*, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2010.



## 4. Ulysses



Virgil's undaunted Ulysses, like Dias after him, sailed for several months until, suddenly, under the stars of the southern pole, he beheld "a mountain obscured by distance and of a height never seen before".<sup>25</sup> Table Mountain was thus imagined before it had been discovered, pre-dating Portugal's first sighting by one hundred and fifty years. As reports filtered into Europe, Venetian mapmakers identified it as Dante's visionary Mountain of the Sea and, soon enough, Table Mountain was likened to Paradise and Robben Island to Purgatory. It's a bitter historical irony that the island was later used to isolate mutineering sailors, social outcasts and political prisoners.

<sup>25</sup> More accurate but perhaps less poetic is: "...there appeared to us a mountain dark in the distance, and to me it seemed the highest I had ever seen." *Inferno*, XXVI, 133–135, trans. by Charles S. Singleton.



## 5. Cyclops



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This Ulyssean imagery inspired Camões' Adamastor which, as Guardian of the Portal, challenged Gama when he first entered Cape waters. The name *Adamastor* means "untamed" or "wild" and embodies all the hostile and vindictive character of the Cape.<sup>26</sup> Adamastor protected the Cape of Storms from those who dared discover its secrets or seize Africa's riches. He was turned to stone, like goddess Pyrene, protector of the pre-Christian sun-mysteries in Iberia.<sup>27</sup> As Pyrene is to the Pyrenees, so Adamastor is to Table Mountain.

Camões uses the confrontation between Gama and Adamastor as a metaphor for the struggle between modern man and the classical gods. For him, as poet, man's triumph over the gods symbolises the triumph of the Renaissance over the Medieval, humanism over dogmatism, faith over superstition; while the Gama-Adamastor confrontation represents the conflict between Europe and Africa, Empire and Colony, civilisation and barbarism.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> According to David Quint, the figure of Adamastor is inspired by both the Cyclopean giant in Homer's *Odyssey* and by Polyphemus in Virgil's *Aeneid*. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 99–130. Also, Malvern Van Wyk Smith notes that with the abolitionist debate at the turn of the 18thC "Adamastor becomes the figure of the shackled African, to be redeemed not only from slavery without but also from darkness within." Malvern van Wyk Smith, *Shades of Adamastor*, Grahamstown, Rhodes University, 1988, p.22.

<sup>27</sup> Helene de Villiers, *The Grailstone in Africa and the search for Prester John*, Cape Town, The Attic Press, 2006, p.40 and p.75.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Gray asserts that "the figure of Adamastor is at the root of all the subsequent white semiology invented to cope with the African experience" and that white South African poetry starts with Camões. *South African Literature: an introduction*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1979, p.27.



## 6. Great Outer Sea



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Classical geographers believed a Great Outer Sea surrounded their world. The Greeks and Arabs saw this as a vast river, circular in form, encircling all Europe, Asia and Africa. From the geography taught by Aristotle, Nearchus of Crete, admiral of Alexander's fleet, believed they had reached the Great Outer Sea in the East and that circumnavigation of the world was now possible.

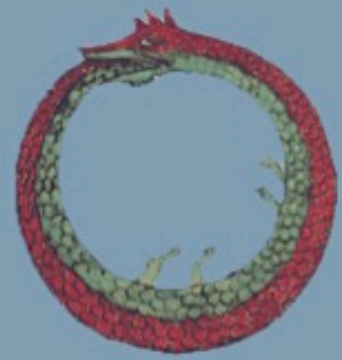
Intrigued by the idea, Alexander dreamt of conquering Arabia Felix, thereby allowing his mariners to sail on to Egypt, a land he already controlled and where, unchallenged, his soldiers would dig a canal linking the Red Sea to the Nile—as Pharaoh Necho and Darius the Great had tried before—and so open up the Mediterranean. From Egypt he would go on to conquer Europe and Africa and, just as the Great Outer Sea bound the world, so his empire would unite all its people. The world would become a commonwealth of nations.

But fate took another turn. Alexander died as Nearchus came to tell him that his new ships lay waiting at the Tigris-Euphrates estuary. And so the campaign was never launched. It was supposed to be a grand military, mercantile and scientific expedition: the circumnavigation of the world, east to west, via the Great Outer Sea.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Rachael Shepherd, 'Francisco D'Almeida and the Cape of Africa', in Ralph Shepherd (ed.), *Invisible Africa*, 1996, Cape Town, Novalis Press, p.96.



# 7. Eternal Return



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Lastly, the Pythagoreans believed in the transmigration of the soul and that similar events occur over and over to the same people, the same families, and even to the same cities. Virgil, likewise, described how history repeats itself and “the great line of centuries begins anew as a second Argo carries its chosen heroes to another war, to another shore”.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, numerous campaigns, from the siege of Moorish Granada (1492) to the conquest of Incan Chile (1541), have since been cast as repetitions of the Trojan War.

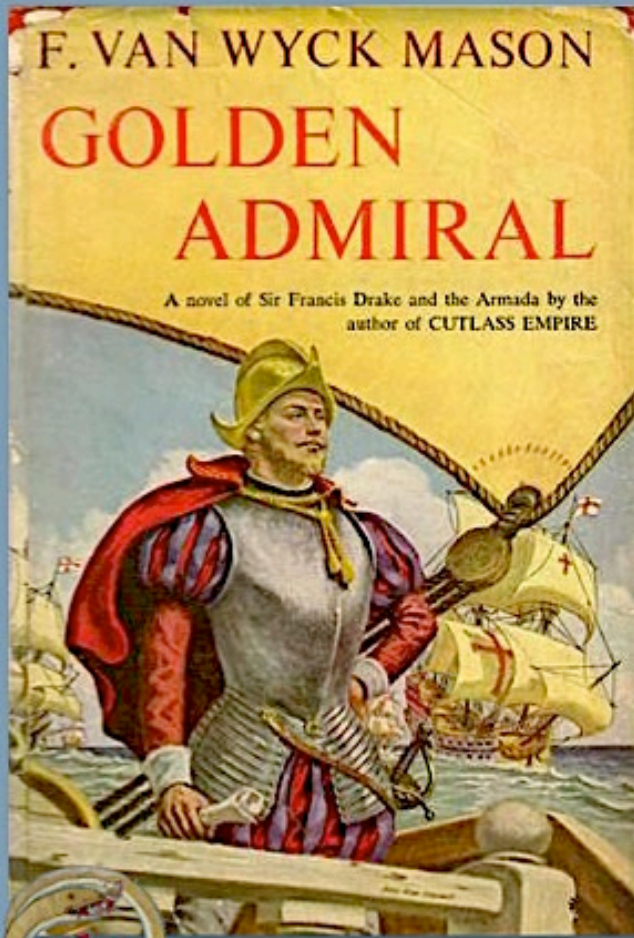
Here two Portuguese examples stand out. First, as Viceroy of Portuguese India, Francisco d’Almeida knew he would undertake the same sea voyage once planned by Nearchus, but in the opposite direction, west to east, and so fulfil Alexander’s dying dream of rounding Africa in order to expand an empire on new-found shores.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, Almeida’s rival and successor in India, Captain-General Afonso de Albuquerque, arguably Portugal’s greatest conqueror, was given the notorious appellation “Caesar of the East”.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> This passage has also been translated as: “Another Argo will arise to carry chosen heroes, a second Tiphys as helmsman: there will be another War, and great Achilles will be sent once more to Troy.” Virgil, *Eclagues* (Selections), IV 31, c.40BCE, trans. Antony S Kline, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Johannes Stein, ‘Portugal as Preparer for the British Mission’, *The Present Age*, vol. 1, no. 6, May 1936, p.13.

<sup>32</sup> For more parallels between ancient and modern personages and their karmic biographies—including Almeida and his contemporaries—see *Knot of Stone: the day that changed South Africa’s history*, Bury St Edmunds, Arena Books, 2011, pp.308–312, 344–347.





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Following the Viking raids and Norman conquests of the 8th–11thC, the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) and the Franco-Spanish Navies (1805) were viewed as repetitions of the same battle—namely England’s battle against invasion, first by Philip II of Spain, and then by Napoleon. In the English popular imagination, Sir Francis Drake and Lord Nelson were seen as one and the same hero, a guardian spirit who returns again and again to ensure their victory.<sup>33</sup> The Edwardian poet Alfred Noyes adds that Drake was “first upon the deep that rolls to Trafalgar”<sup>34</sup> and, moreover, that local lore says the beat of Drake’s old drum has been heard through the ages—from Cromwell to Wellington, from Plymouth to Dunkirk. Perhaps this explains why the English keep reviving him.

From a Pythagorean perspective, we ordinarily return to the same group but, from time to time, are reborn as allies and opponents, friends or rivals, in order to resolve conflictual relationships between families, cities and states. This implies that national heroes—including Drake and Nelson—do not fight for the same side each time but have “coursed through history like a wave through the ocean toward some as yet unknown shore”.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> W T Jewkes, ‘Sir Francis Drake Revived: From Letters to Legend’, in Norman Thrower (ed.), *Sir Francis Drake and the famous voyage, 1577–1580*, Los Angeles, University of California, 1984, pp.118–120.

<sup>34</sup> Alfred Noyes, ‘Drake: An English Epic’, Book XI, 1908, p.296. Curiously, at the height of WWI, Noyes published a letter which claims that “all Devonshire knows Nelson was a reincarnation of Sir Francis”, *The Times*, London, 28 August 1916.

<sup>35</sup> Laurence Oliver, ‘The Archons of Arcturus’, unpublished material, 2001. For example, the founders of the Achaemenid Empire returned as Alexander and his Companions to conquer what they had once created—thus serving to correct power imbalances between forces of evil and our will for freedom.





I die to be born a fighter,  
only to die again, once more.

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George S Patton, *Through a Glass, Darkly*, 1922

While comparisons between men-at-arms may be evocative, even metaphoric, they tend to remain speculative because it is not alone history that repeats itself but we who do. We return to fight another day or, as General Patton declared in his youthful poem, 'Through a Glass, Darkly':

So forever in the future,  
Shall I battle as of yore,  
Dying to be born a fighter,  
But to die again, once more.<sup>36</sup>

Although a staunch fatalist, Patton blended his belief in reincarnation with his knowledge of military history and alluded to several past lives in which he'd fought and died. He claimed to remember being a citizen-soldier in the Greco-Persian Wars (499–449BCE), a soldier for Alexander at the siege of Tyre (332BCE), a brother-in-arms of Hannibal during the Second Punic War (218–201BCE), a legionary in Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars (58–50BCE), a Norse Viking, an English knight during the Hundred Years War (1337–1453) and, lastly, as a grand officer in the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). While no marine, Patton still found himself on several far-flung shores several times.

<sup>36</sup> George S Patton, *Through a Glass, Darkly*, c.1922. The title is derived from 1 Corinthians 13 and trans. as 'Now we see but a poor reflection in a mirror'.





Far too often, the world views Africa through the prism of problems. When I look to Africa I see a continent of hope, promise and vast potential...

António Guterres, African Union summit address, 2017



Finally, there's always that last slide which should be removed from a presentation since it may provoke or push a point too far. Perhaps this is that one. The citation, "When I look to Africa I see a continent of hope, promise and vast potential",<sup>37</sup> could easily have been said by king Manuel, not because both men are Portuguese or because they hold, held, the balance of power/order in their respective worlds, but because of what has been suggested regarding the current United Nations SG António Guterres:

He is the reincarnation of Manuel I, nicknamed "the Fortunate" because he was lucky to have become king of Portugal. Let's hope luck will be on his side in this life for the sake of world peace.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> António Guterres, African Union summit address, 30 January 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Laurence Oliver, private email correspondence, 1 January 2017. In a follow-up email he adds, "António Manuel De Oliveira Guterres. We know why the Manuel is there. Could the Olive allusion in his name be as to an olive branch of peace? And if so will the nations accept it?" 6 February 2017.



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**POR UNA RAZA FUERTE,  
LABORIOSA, PACIFISTA Y SOBERANA**



**加强战备 练好杀敌**



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In conclusion, the repetition of classical motifs is widespread and occurs across all cultures, all ages, all genders, and is as old as storytelling itself. In turn, the legend of the Argo is itself an evocation of far older myths that reach into the mists of time. Their continuity is surely proof that we choose to tell and retell, live and relive, our past in ever new ways. To do so may embolden us, enlighten us, entertain us, or simply remind us of whom we once were.

I thank you for your patience, and the CHAM conference organisers for this opportunity, albeit thirty years after submitting my first essay to colleagues at the University of Lisbon.

Nicolaas Vergunst  
Lisbon, 13 July 2017