

SAMPLE
TRANSLATION

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HOW THE WORLD WAS
SEEN

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Lucija Stepančič: How The World Was Seen

By sailors, merchants, cartographers, pirates, explorers, rulers, adventurers, scientists, politicians, poets, artists and astronauts

1.

Our ancient ancestors

Today, it no longer takes somebody really cool to know that the Earth is round. Everybody knows that. But it wasn't always so. For centuries and millennia people thought the Earth was flat as a pancake. All right, as long as one only goes to the nearest store, school or cinema (all of which didn't exist back then), he himself would not guess that in reality he is walking on a giant ball, floating in space. He would sooner say that he is walking on something flat, while the sky with the Sun and the Moon arches above his head. But as soon as humanity ventured on longer and more adventurous journeys, they learned much more. Above all, they learned the fact, that the truth is not always evident at the first sight.

What did the world look like to our ancient ancestors? Above all, they saw it as something so much greater than them, something so mighty and violent, that it can only be the work of gods (or God). They were constantly threatened by the size and cruelty of the world and therefore they imagined their gods as merciless. And since even everyday survival demanded great efforts in ancient times, the creation of the world must have therefore been even more difficult, almost unimaginable. In people's opinion, it was love between gods that created the world where they lived their modest and dangerous lives, for instance between father Sky and mother Earth, as in an ancient Greek myth. In ancient Egypt, it was vice versa, mother Sky and father Earth gave life to the gods. Even more often the world was created in a battle between divine monsters and no less divine heroes. According to Babylonian, Nordic and other mythologies, the Earth grew from the dead body of a giant beast. But most often creation myths were combinations of such stories. Wild and sophisticated mythological stories arose and they can still captivate us, even today, when our notions about the beginning of the world are completely different.

2.

A world traveller millennia ago

What was the world like some thousands of years ago? Things that are gone forever can be conjured up by myths and great poems. One of the most beautiful portraits of the old, ancient world is the story of Odysseus, which brings to life the radiant Mediterranean as it used to be, with its abundance of islands and unspoilt coast. **The Odyssey** is an ancient Greek epic poem about a hero who, despite his superhuman cunningness, got lost on the sea while returning victorious from the Trojan war. Fortune and misfortune drove him from one island to another and on each of them he had a different unexpected adventure. Written some 750 years BC (and describing events that were very old even then), the *Odyssey* is swarming with miraculous creatures, gods, goddesses and monsters, as well as strange foreign kingdoms, their rulers and underlings. It tells the story of heroic adventures of the most cunning man of his age, but it also shows us the picture of the world as created by the then Greeks, who lived near the sea and with the sea, scattered over numerous islands and islets. Odysseus is said to have travelled all the world known by the Greeks: the present Turkish coast, southern Italy and Sicily, perhaps he even reached Africa. Greek islands are praised the most, especially his native Ithaca. The pride of a wondrously beautiful land, but also the fear excited by a life full of dangers, have thus been preserved through millennia.

Some of the legendary places can be easily found even nowadays, be it a modern city (Athens) or an open-air museum (Mycenae). Others took much guessing and a long search (Troy), while some of them are pure legend (Atlantis). Greek islands are today a tourist Mecca, but back then, they were a whole world to their inhabitants, who probably never saw anything else in their entire lives. Wondrous adventures with monsters and angry gods are probably a reflection of real conditions, when sailing was deadly dangerous, but almost inevitable. To those people, the sea seemed as inexhaustible as the universe seems to us; islands were like planets in our science fiction movies, where you never know what awaits you. There was, however, an important difference: the “universe” of their imagination is sunlit, and though just a part of the Mediterranean, there is enough space for all the people and all the gods.

3.

What is Cosmos?

The world can be seen in different ways. We can either look at it, allowing our vivid imagination to enjoy its beauties, or we can try to understand it and get to the bottom of things – similarly as there are people who like colours and shapes of cars, and others who are more interested in the functioning of the engine. Thus, not only poets but also the first scientists, the so called Ionian School of philosophy, emerged in ancient Greece about 2600 years ago. They were no longer satisfied with picturesque mythological explanations of the world's origins. They were looking not for miracles but for explanations.

What is the world that we can see made of? Is it possible to discover, behind all the jumble of this world, a hidden order and laws governing the seemingly diverse happenings with consistent logic? Could we, on the basis of the changes of day and night, seasons of the year and constellations, infer the nature of the universe?

They were the first to suspect that everything in existence is made of elements or atoms, that the Earth is a celestial body floating in empty space. They tried to explain the movement of the Sun, Moon and stars, but at the same time they were, at least for our taste, still somewhat poetic. On no account dull scholars, but as diverse a company as artists, they amazed with their vivid imagination again and again. For them, the still young world was a giant observatory, where natural phenomena such as the shadow of a pyramid, a solar eclipse, the accumulation of clouds in the sky, or hatred between fire and water can lead us to the hidden plan explaining the functioning of the universe.

Text in the illustration (p. 6 + 7): The world as imagined by Anaximenes (ca. 500 BC)

4.

The first proof that the Earth is round

As mentioned in the first chapter, it is not possible to establish the actual shape of the Earth at first sight. In the distant past, different cultures imagined our home planet in different ways: sometimes even as a regular and perfectly flat geometric body, lying in the middle of an undefined ocean. The early Egyptians suggested a square divided by the Nile, the Native Americans and the Indians an equilateral triangle, the Aztecs a peculiar cross shape. There were also opposing opinions about what supports the Earth: the Tatars imagined the Earth resting on the back of a giant fish, while the Hindus thought it is carried by elephants standing on a turtle. For long millennia, colourful, though erroneous beliefs prevailed. Every now and then, however, there was someone who guessed that the Earth is round. Interestingly, this was mostly the opinion of ancient Greek philosophers (Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle). **Eratosthenes** (285-194 BC) proved it by an experiment. More than 200 years BC!

His proof was an ingenious combination of observation and calculation. He heard that in Aswan, Egypt, the Sun cast no shadow on the day of the summer solstice (21st June) at noon. This means that the rays must be perfectly vertical – which is especially obvious if you look into a deep well. Eratosthenes lived in Alexandria, 800 km north from Aswan, and he knew well that the same Sun cast shadow there at the same time. He measured the angle of the Sun's rays there (at the same time) and his result was $7^{\circ} 12'$, which is approximately $1/50^{\text{th}}$ of a circle. From this he could infer that the Earth is round, for the difference could only be caused by the spherical shape of the planet. If the Earth was flat, the angle of Sun's rays would be the same everywhere.

Moreover, Eratosthenes also calculated the circumference of the Earth. He multiplied the distance between Alexandria and Aswan by 50 (the afore-mentioned $1/50^{\text{th}}$ of a circle), which totalled a little more than 40,000 km, measured in stadia, a contemporary unit of measurement. His result was surprisingly accurate. Simple. Or ingenious?

Eratosthenes had one more brilliant idea. He incorporated horizontal and vertical lines, predecessors of parallels and meridians, in his map of the world. This later prompted Hiparchus, one of the greatest Greek astronomers and geographers, to suggest that the grid should be drawn evenly and systematically. Eratosthenes drew his lines quite randomly, using his own logic. But perhaps already the idea itself was enough of an achievement.

Text in the illustration (p. 8): Eratosthenes

Text in the illustration (p. 9): Alexandria, Aswan. In order to calculate the circumference of the Earth, Eratosthenes needs to know the distance between the two towns.

5.

The centre of the world

Today, we know well that the Earth's surface has no centre. It would be equally pointless to look for the central point on the surface of a ball. In the time of early civilizations, however, people were convinced that there must be the centre of the world, even more, that it is a special sacred place, associated with deities and supernatural forces. For the rulers who proclaimed themselves gods it was crucial to convince their subjects that their palace (or temple) is something hallowed, the centre, if not the very navel of the world. They only needed a building of sufficient magnificence to prove this claim. Thus emerged cities such as the infamous Babylon, but also Delphi, the most important Greek oracle, where the god Apollo supposedly slew Python, a snake who guarded the navel of the Earth. Other peoples preferred their sacred mountains (Ararat for the Armenians, Sinai for the Jews, Meru in Buddhist and Hindu tradition). The importance of religious centres such as Rome, Mecca and Jerusalem has never declined.

While the concept of the world's centre might not correspond to the scientifically derived view of reality, a centre represents concentrated power and encouragement and searching for it therefore suits people's spiritual needs. Every decent activity needs its centre. Fashion would not be fashion without Paris, film would not be film without Hollywood. The centre of fine art moved from Rome to Paris and later to New York, which is also the centre of stock exchange, banking and trade, as well as the financial centre (although today, centres of power have slowly started to shift to the East).

A centre of any kind was, however, not always proclaimed, praised or displayed. Sometimes, it was better to hide it. The central point of a labyrinth has a similar symbolic role as the above mentioned »navels of the world«. Greek mythology gave us the story of Minotaur, a monster with a human body and the head of a bull, who tyrannized the local population, and the king had him locked in a labyrinth. Maze puzzles from newspapers and magazines are therefore of a venerable age. In the mythological way of thinking, a labyrinth signifies a coded map, which can only be solved by a hero, a chosen one (such as the one who killed Minotaur). The way to the centre is meant to be complicated, unlike maps, which try to be as clear as possible. The journey through a labyrinth thus symbolizes difficulties that threaten travellers during a real journey.

Text in the illustration (p. 11): Where, o where is Minotaur?

6.

The abyss at the end of the world

Although seemingly reasonable, the idea that the Earth is flat has a weird disadvantage: the frightening realization that the world we know has to suddenly end somewhere. From time immemorial, people imagined a deep abyss, which opens into the unknown, perhaps even into Hell. How big is this world? What does it stand on? Where is its centre? How does it end? What, if we fall over the edge? People in ancient times were quite worried about such questions and the like.

Today we know that the abyss at the end of the world has never been found – for it doesn't exist. The fear that they would fall off a flat plate never became a reality, no matter how far people ventured on the land or on the sea. They travelled farther and farther and their countries expanded. The only obstacle – apart from other countries – were natural boundaries.

Ancient Greeks and Romans controlled the coasts of the Mediterranean from about 1000 BC to about 500 AD. The Roman state in particular was an example of an intimidatingly large empire – but nevertheless limited on the west. Conquerors were stopped by the Atlantic Ocean, which was much larger and more treacherous than the smaller, friendlier and familiar Mediterranean Sea. In Africa, they were stopped by the mighty mountain range of Atlas and the Sahara desert. Back then, those obstacles were almost invincible and the world practically ended there. The utmost edge of the world, its mysteriousness, as well as danger, was thus represented by natural formations: the strait of Gibraltar, which separates the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, a desert and a mountain range.

The Atlas and Gibraltar, obstacles standing relatively close to each other, excited not only anger but also respect and imagination. The powerful ocean and the mighty mountain range both incited fear and people considered them the property of gods. Guarding the entrance to the ocean, Gibraltar was associated with the hero and demigod Heracles (Hercules), who supposedly marked the dangerous place with two pillars. Hence another name for the place: the Pillars of Hercules. The Atlas mountains, on the other hand, were seen as a cursed petrified giant supporting the sky itself. Greatness was thus attributed to the limits of the world, but people nevertheless wondered, at least occasionally, what could be hiding behind them. One of the most beautiful Greek legends speaks of Atlantis, an ancient sunken island in the middle of the terrible Atlantic. In reality, there was the undiscovered America waiting on the other side of the ocean. But until 1492, it remained too far for everybody, except for a few Vikings.

Text in the illustration (p. 13): Neptune, Atlas, Hercules.

7.

Ptolemy and Battleships

Claudius Ptolemy, who lived in the second century AD in Alexandria, Egypt, was active in the time when the Roman Empire reached its peak and reigned practically over the entire known world. Other, undiscovered parts of the Earth, however, remained a mystery – America, Australia, the Pacific and the majority of Africa. Even the farthest edges of the known world, India and China, were only known by confused accounts of merchants, soldiers and sailors, who saw those places with their own eyes. Ptolemy was among the first who realized that some order was required and that the map of the world would need to be drawn with mathematical precision. He established cartography (the drawing of maps) and took a systematic approach to it. With the above-mentioned Eratosthenes as his role model, he set to work. His system was not based on ever unreliable descriptions, but rather on precise measurements and calculations. Having divided the Earth in squares, he – like in the game Battleships – defined the position of every location within this grid. Geographical latitude tells us how far a location is from the Equator, while geographical longitude defines its east-west position (from the specified meridian, which is today in London, but back then it was at the westernmost point of the known world). While Ptolemy wasn't the first to come up with this idea, he polished it to perfection and made it useful. He used astrolabe, a simple yet effective instrument for measuring geographical latitude. In his sunny homeland, he, like his predecessor Eratosthenes, made use of positions of shadows. Mysterious codes from pirate movies are merely the locations where treasures are hidden, marked using his system. After a millennium and a half, Ptolemy was still taken seriously, even by pirates. But this is already a different story ...

History remembers Ptolemy as an authority who, with immense energy, refined the jumbled cartography of his time, set it on firm foundations and provided norms that are still relevant today. His system leaves no space for made-up stories and imagination; 2000 years ago he already thought in a similar way as people do today. He, however, did have one dream. Well familiar with Eratosthenes's calculation of the size of the Earth, he was well aware that his measurements cover less than one half of the planet. What could be hiding on the other half? He was the first who hypothesized, though only theoretically, that it would be possible to reach India and China from Spain. Such thoughts later inspired Columbus to actually set out on such a journey. But this, again, is a different story ...

Text in the illustration (p. 14): Ptolemy of Alexandria

Text in the illustration (p. 15): Shall we play Battleships?

8.

Night cartography

Do exploration of Earth and exploration of sky have anything in common? Hardly anything, we could say today. But many centuries ago, knowing the constellations was crucial for orientation in unknown parts of the world. By knowing well the constellations and their changing position in the sky, we can define our position on the surface of the Earth. Ancient peoples knew the constellations practically by heart! In addition to his main work, a treatise titled *Geographia*, Ptolemy also presented *Almagest*, a scientific treatise on astronomy, which contained a catalogue of stars with data on 1022 stars, written about 1850 years. Knowing the stars was essential for everybody, be it a farmer or an astrologer. Stars had the function of a calendar, and since there were no televisions or cinemas, we can see stargazing as an equivalent of that.

Today, it is not often that we can see the night sky in its full splendour. Most of the stars, including the Milky Way, disappear in the light emitted by big cities. But for ancient peoples, a magnificent night view of the universe was commonplace. People had enough time for stargazing and they took pleasure in it. In the sky, the ancient Greeks – and Babylonians before them – saw a reflection of their mythological stories, as well as hints to the future. And it was by observing stars that Ptolemy came to the conclusion about the shape of the world: considering the appearances and disappearances of certain stars, the Earth can only be spherical!

Claudius Ptolemy, however, made a mistake that people then kept repeating for centuries. According to him, the Earth was the centre of the universe, while the Sun, the Moon and the stars rotated around it (Ptolemy's geocentric model). While we know today that it is not the Earth but the Sun that is the centre of our solar system, it needs to be said that Ptolemy's measurements were still perfectly correct.

And finally: in his maps, he tried to represent his home planet like it would be seen from space.

Text in the illustration (p. 17): These celestial creatures are even more dangerous than those on Earth!

9.

The first travel guidebook

When did the first travel guides appear? The answer would be: around 160 AD, when a Greek author Pausanias published his *Description of Greece*. The Romans started to write their own guidebooks a bit later, around 300 AD. Indeed! At first, these guidebooks led to Rome, a splendid metropolis and the capital of the then world. Later, when Christianity gained influence in the Roman Empire (first it was permitted and then it became the official religion), the number of guidebooks increased dramatically: they led to places from the Bible, to Jerusalem and Galilee. Unlike today, the majority of travellers back then set on their journeys prompted by religious motives. Travelling was not a relaxing activity, as it is for us, but a great risk, and pilgrims would often find themselves in deadly dangers. They knew practically nothing about the distant lands they were going to, for there were no photos, no TV documentaries or films, and decent maps were hard to get. Robbers reigned over roads and neither horses nor carriages offered sufficient protection against the elements. The journey dragged, tired horses needed to be changed often, usually in the inns where travellers slept.

To ease travelling as much as possible, guidebooks describing the journey soon started to be published. While obviously without photos or maps, they contained major points of orientation: towns, fortresses, inns. Often included were very factual data: the length of the journey, the time needed, the number of days and how often it is necessary to change horses. A pilgrim thus had at least a rough idea as to what to expect. There were also lively descriptions of the places at the end of the journey. Pilgrims, whose excited imagination was eager for miracles, could read about recoveries and forgiveness that await them at holy places. Illustrations in these guidebooks might seem ridiculously simplified: instead of representing the terrain as it is, places are merely strung along a straight line. We must know, however, that few people in those times were interested in the high science of scholars like Ptolemy. In practice, the Romans liked to simplify things, a typical example being their road maps, where the shape of the lands is disregarded, while the road network, the pride of Rome, is described in detail.

Pilgrimage tourism bloomed again about 1000 years later, in the High Middle Ages, when Rome was no longer (just) a cosmopolitan capital, but became one of the holy places itself.

Text in the illustration (p. 18 + 19): I told you to bring a guidebook!

10.

Earth as a living being

Could it be possible that the Earth is a living being? Ancient peoples would probably agree. In many mythologies (for instance Greek and Egyptian) the Earth is more than just alive, it is the mother (or the father) of gods. Romans also sacrificed to the Earth at an early stage of their religion. Through time, ideas about the Earth changed greatly. From the goddess called Gea, who was married to the Sky and symbolized the divine origin of the world, to Demeter (the Roman Ceres), who brought rich harvest and acted as a mother figure, nurturing mankind.

Other peoples in Europe also worshipped the Earth, each in their own way, among them the Celts and the Slavs. In the past, people were much closer to nature than we are and nature was vitally important for their survival. Ancient religious beliefs were often very cruel and in some cultures they demanded human sacrifices. The advancement of civilization gradually suppressed the majority of the most extreme ideas. Some notions, however, have survived long centuries under various disguises. A surprising worldview has been preserved in one of Slovene traditional folk songs. It is about a fish, Faronika, a giant beast that carries the entire world. When the fish swings its tail, the world will end. How did such an idea occur to a forgotten poet? Though not very prominent for centuries, the sense of smallness in comparison with the forces of nature has never disappeared entirely. It is often only now that we are rediscovering, through ecology, our dependence on nature and the fragile beauty of our home planet.

So, is the Earth alive, then? In the sense that it must be treated respectfully and responsibly, it certainly is!

Text in the illustration (p. 22): Please, don't wiggle your tail!

11.

Maps of imagination

Now we already know that the art of mapmaking changed greatly over centuries. Not just because of the knowledge necessary for such work, but mostly because of ideas. What expectations do people have from maps, why do they draw them, what do they search in them? One would say that we use maps in order to know the world and distant lands, that maps help us when we travel, that they are something completely practical, accurate and reliable. But it wasn't always so. During the Middle Ages, maps were drawn not to explore lands and look for new routes, but to express the view of the world – which was quite different from the present one. Unlike us, people were not so much interested in this world, they were much more enthusiastic about searching for Heaven. Some even believed that the Heaven can be found on Earth, and that while it is far, almost too far, it is still a part of this world. They must have mixed the legends about the garden of Eden on Earth and about Heaven somewhere in the sky. St Brendan, an Irish monk from the 6th century, is said to have actually found paradise on Earth – it is presumed that he landed on one of the Canary Islands or on Madeira. Even more distant places were completely cloaked in legends. People also believed that rivers sprung from Heaven, if not all of them, then at least the largest four: Euphrates, Tigris, Nile and Ganges (Pyson and Ghion).

Medieval maps in their earliest phase divided the Earth in just three parts: Europe, Africa and Asia, the only known continents. Asia was typically on the top – not because of physical reality, but because of its spiritual significance. Asia seemed the most splendid, the most spiritual – Jesus Christ was from Asia (Israel), together with all the rest of the biblical characters.

It is not entirely true that the Middle Ages was a period of darkness; even today we are often captivated by its power of imagination. Dreams of paradise gave people the strength to endure a life much harder than it is today. Is that really something miraculous? After all, feeding our imagination is also our first reason for travelling. We already know that centuries ago, it was much more difficult, expensive and dangerous to travel. Those not destined for travelling had a field day on paper and that is the reason why ancient maps are often works of art. Nobody was bothered by all sorts of things that found their way into maps. Fantastically transformed mythological places, known and unknown castles, fleets, aggressive savages, mountain ranges, camels, elephants, lions, caravans, exotic kings, tents and ports, sea monsters, and often also the main winds – depicted as heads with puffed cheeks. The habit of drawing on maps persisted until the 19th century, when the need for accuracy replaced imagination completely.

Text in the illustration (p. 22): North, East, South, West. Asia, Europe, Africa. The Don, The Nile, Mediterranean Sea.

Text in the illustration (p. 23): Paradise!

12.

Silk Route

Who saw the most of the world a millennium ago? Merchants! Even much earlier, people discovered that trade can bring excellent money. Precious goods from distant lands were especially desired and the most fearless merchants ventured all the way to China to buy silk and spices that couldn't be found in Europe. As early as 200 BC, the famous Silk Route, the only link between Europe and the Orient was thus formed. A network of routes led across wild and unknown lands, through deserts and past belligerent tribes. On the backs of patient horses and camels, wrapped in coarse bags, travelled magically beautiful loads of luxurious goods: not only silk, but also jewels and pearls, fragrances, luxurious carpets, jewellery and exotic spices. Royal courts would pay good money for them all.

Beside missionaries and papal or royal emissaries, it was merchants who travelled the most. When Ptolemy was collecting data for his map of the world, merchants were his source of information. He was, however, often disappointed, for these otherwise practical people didn't study distant lands with scientific precision, they often even contributed to the rich treasury of superstition. **Marco Polo** (1254-1324), who is today known as one of the greatest explorers, was also a merchant, although a different one. His journey from Venice to China and back lasted 24 years (it would normally take "only" 7 years to travel there and back again along the Silk Route). Marco Polo, however, took his time, he befriended the ruler, Kublai Khan, served in his court, travelled a great part of China and far towards the south, all the way to Sumatra. But the most important fact is that he carefully described everything he saw. In his travel journals, he described some incredible things, although they would be perfectly ordinary today. He saw paper money, printing on paper, burning coal, big ships and cities and many, many more. In that time, China was still more advanced than Europe. While the Chinese, especially the great Khan, showed great interest in the West and were fascinated by everything they learned, they never even thought about going there themselves. One could wonder why.

While there are some other travelogues from the Middle Ages, none of them enjoy the same fame. After his return to Venice, Marco Polo, aided by a friend, published his travelogue under the title *Book of the Marvels of the World*, later renamed simply as *The Travels of Marco Polo*, or even just *The Million*. The Vikings also travelled (though not along the Silk Route). Their adventures have been preserved in traditional folk songs, the so-called sagas, which tell us how they, around the year 1000, discovered America and even fought Native Americans. The most famous among Arab travellers is **Ibn Batuta** (1304-1377), who was born in Morocco. In the 14th century he travelled not only Arabia, but also China, India, and ventured into practically inaccessible parts of Africa, completely unknown to the people of that time. His works are a mixture of precise observations and adventures, swarming with pirates and shipwrecks.

13.

Shangri-La

It is well known that Shangri-La means a fictional land where everything is perfect, just like one would wish, where everybody enjoys eternal summer, almost a paradise on Earth. We can imagine such a land, but at the same time we know well that it doesn't exist. In the Middle Ages, however, people did believe in such lands – though they did not use the name Shangri-La, which is quite modern. Legends about mystical lands were inspired by real India, about which people knew little: just that it is very beautiful, very strange, very rich and very far. Centuries ago, it was practically impossible to get to India and it was only known from books – books that were already ancient. People could not see it, but they fantasized about it.

In medieval maps, Europe, north Africa and Near East are drawn relatively accurately, but accuracy starts to fade as we move away from the Mediterranean, and in India it is finally lost. Where there were blank spaces, people had no problem with simply making things up – that was perfectly normal in that time. It was said that in India, there are islands made of pure gold and silver, that wonderful jewels shine everywhere, and that precious aromatic spices are as abundant as wheat is in Europe. While these wonders were beautiful, they were also terrible and people believed that hellish peoples Gog and Magog lurk somewhere far away, at the very edge of the known territories. They imagined that weird, creepy people live in distant lands (not only in India). Do people there really have dog heads instead of human ones? Or perhaps they have no heads at all and their eyes are in their chest? Perhaps they are just like us, just their feet look backwards? And so on, and so on, until slightly larger numbers of Europeans finally started to visit India in the 15th century. Astonished, they discovered that people there had similar ideas about Europeans – they were mostly seen as terrible one-eyed barbarians.

Much has changed since then. In geography and mapmaking it is no longer allowed to make things up. Travels are not unaffordable anymore. It has been known for a long time that people in distant lands are perfectly normal and that treasures don't grow on trees. Just India is still beautiful and magical. Although in a quite different way.