

Cartography as Communication

Fidel Estrada; Professor: Sabine Gölz

Course: The Invention of Writing

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

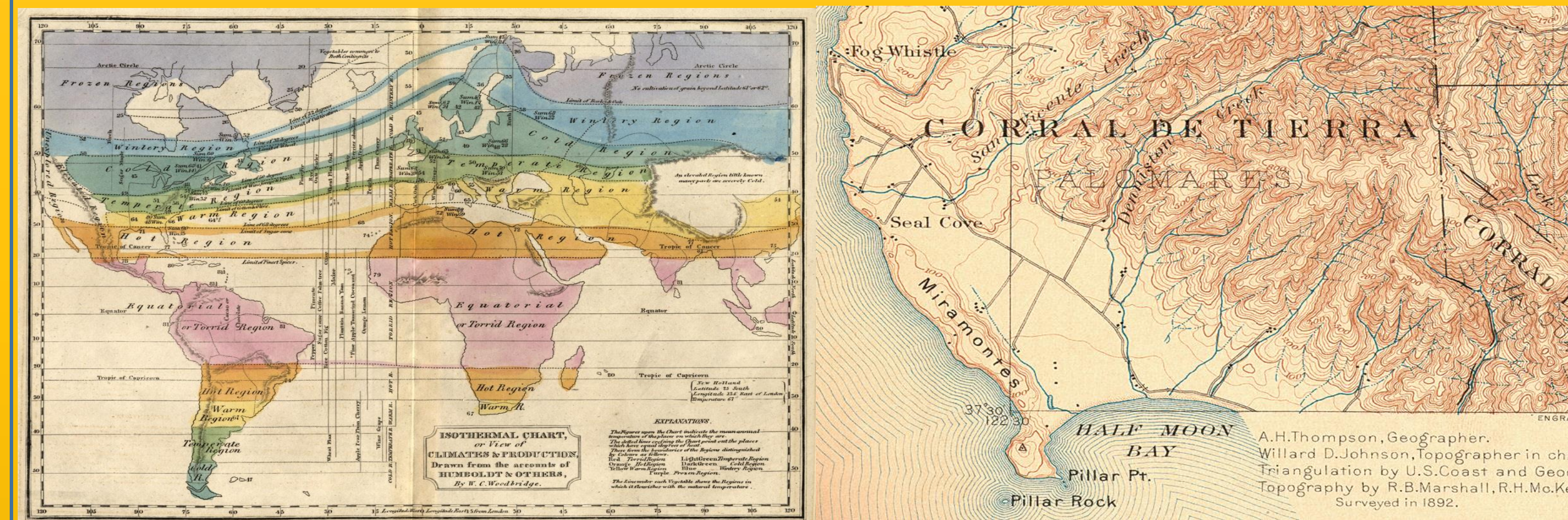
What is Cartography?

- ▶ Discipline of Map making
- ▶ "Maps as tools in human interaction with the spatial environment"
- ▶ Importance lies in
 - ▶ How they are used
 - ▶ Contribution to society
 - ▶ Reflection of culture and times



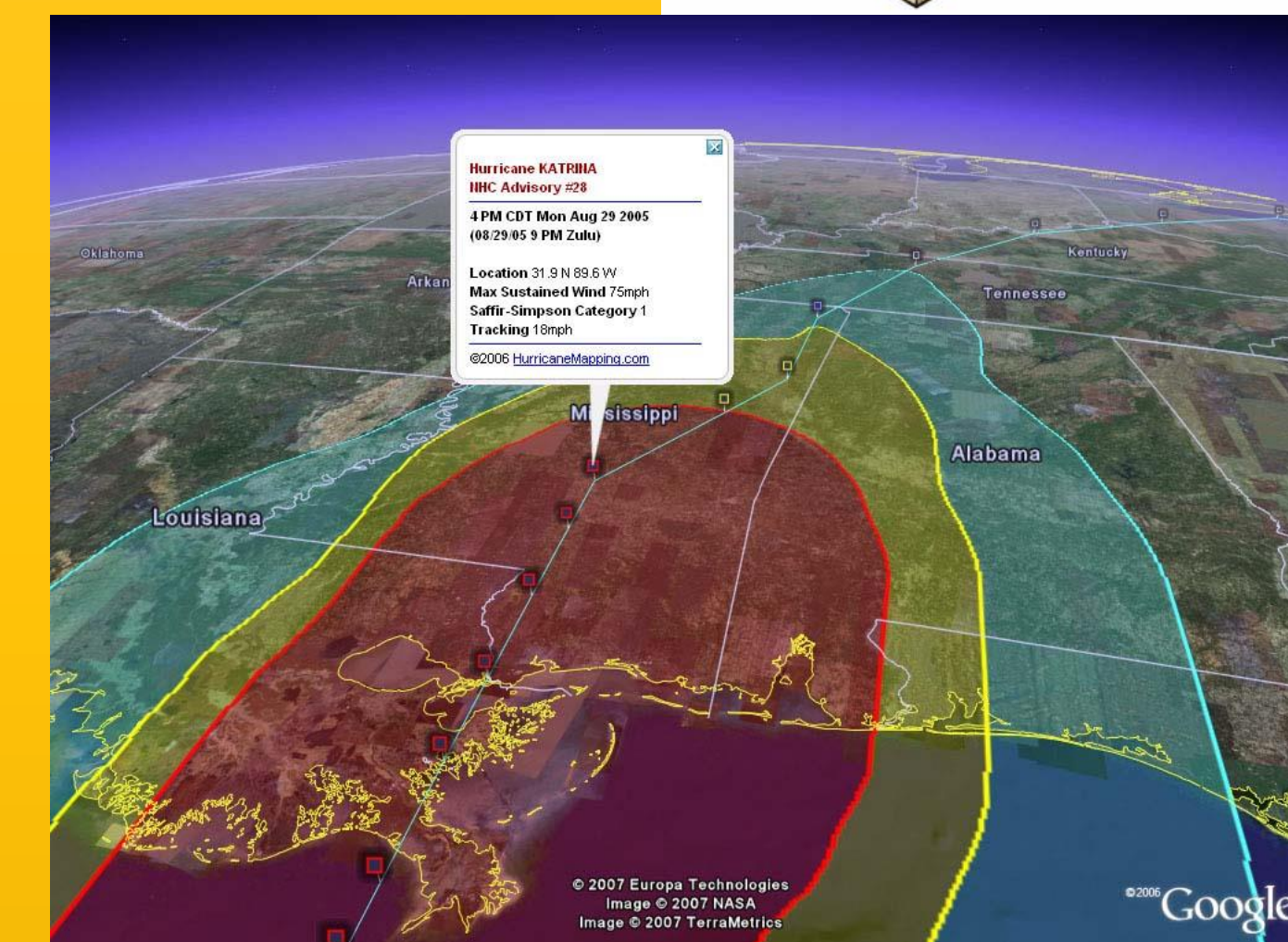
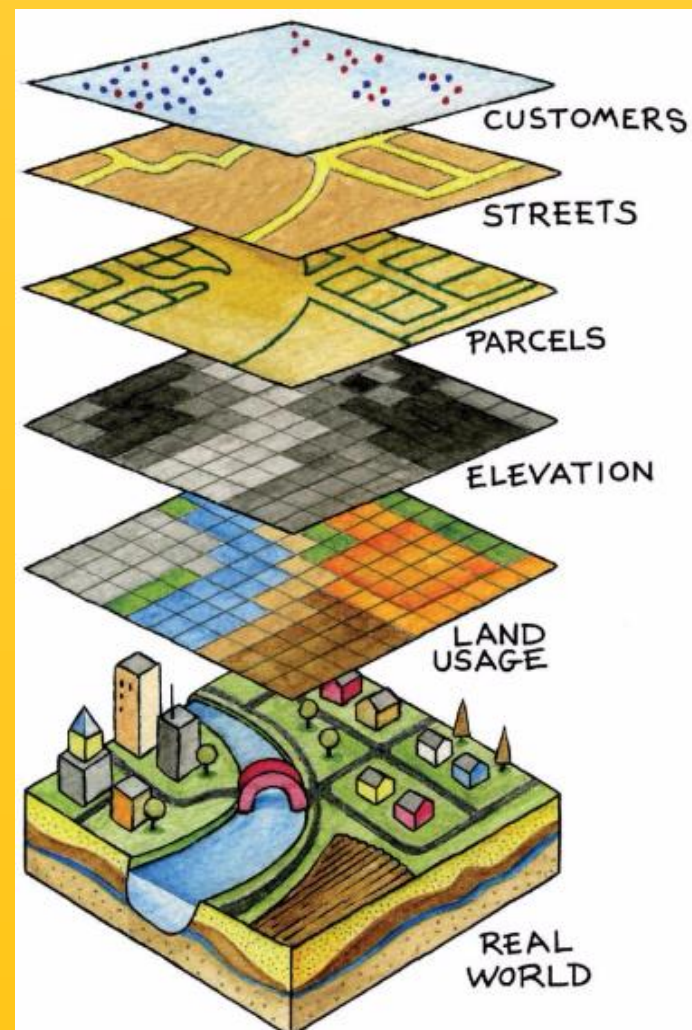
Shift to Modern Cartography

- ▶ National Topographic Mapping
 - ▶ Administration and Taxation, Extract Resources
- ▶ Thematic Cartography
 - ▶ Climatic, iotic and sociocultural environments
- ▶ 19th and 20th Centuries
 - ▶ Innovation of Tech and rise of Academia
- ▶ Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
 - ▶ Use of software to collect, visualize and analyze spatial data



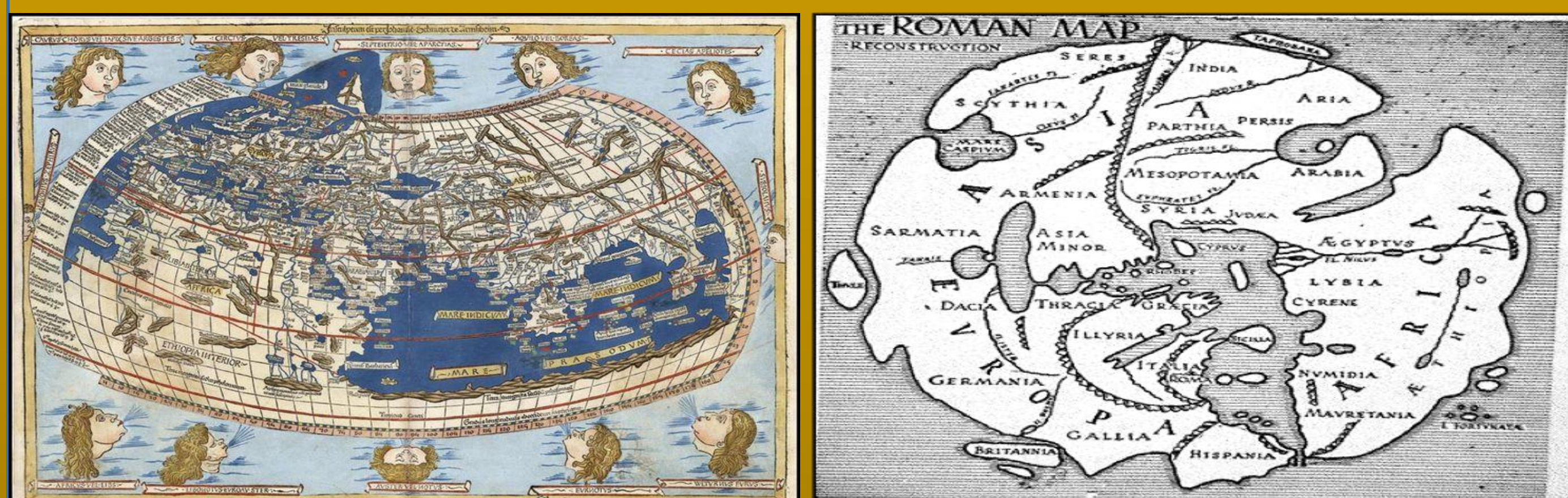
Theoretical Critiques

- ▶ Maps make reality, as much as they represent it
 - ▶ Space, geography, place, identities of people
 - ▶ Actively construct knowledge
- ▶ Maps as social documents
 - ▶ Historical contexts
 - ▶ Ethical responsibility
- ▶ How maps consolidate power
 - ▶ Dominant political structures
 - ▶ Hidden interests
- ▶ Critiques of GIS
 - ▶ Technocratic positivism
 - ▶ Militarism
 - ▶ Geographical culture wars



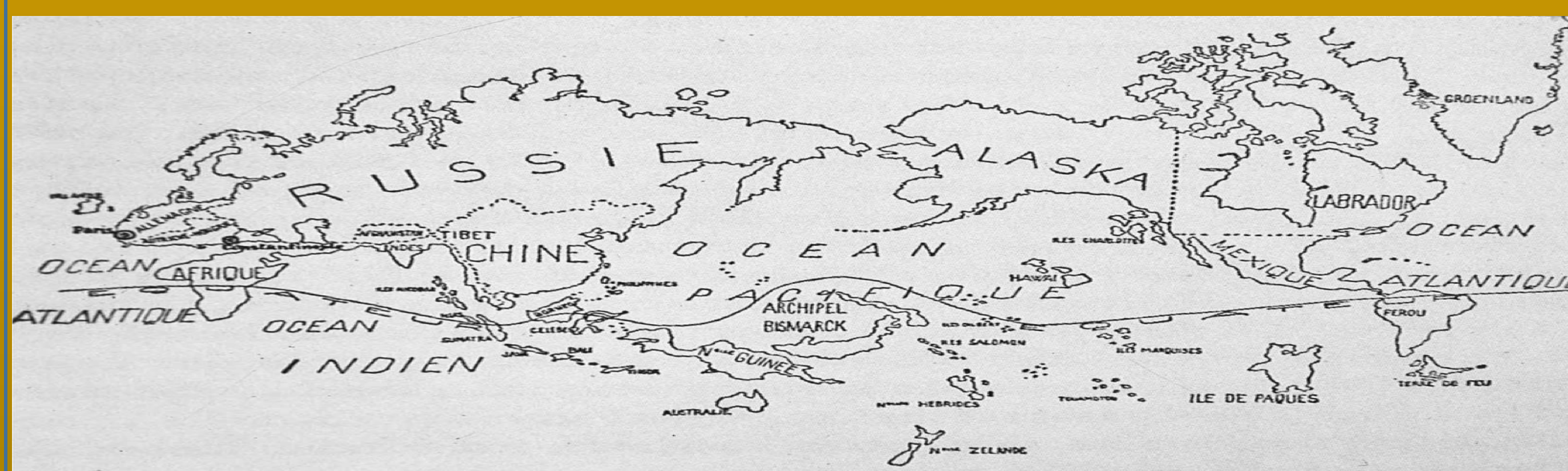
History of Cartography

- ▶ Prehistoric
 - ▶ Star Maps, Cave Paintings, Landmarks
- ▶ Ancient
 - ▶ Land Survey and organization of settlements
- ▶ Middle Ages and Renaissance
 - ▶ Influenced by Catholic Church, Navigation
 - ▶ Maps flourished due to printing and engraving



Critical Cartography

- ▶ What is it?
 - ▶ A two-part argument
 - ▶ New mapping practices and theoretical critique
- ▶ Challenges Cartography as a academic, elitist discipline
 - ▶ Critique of political power
 - ▶ Seeks to democratize map making
- ▶ Critique as examination of assumptions
 - ▶ Understand and suggest alternatives



Conclusions

- ▶ Contemporary academic cartography
 - ▶ Moved beyond some academic tenets
 - ▶ Mapping no longer in hands of experts
 - ▶ Shift in Emphasis from scientific method to exploration of data (Geovisualization)
- ▶ Two areas of critique:
 - ▶ Theoretical critique
 - ▶ Social relevance
 - ▶ Ethics and power relations
 - ▶ New mapping practices
 - ▶ Open source, Google Maps
 - ▶ Data exploration

