

# Vasco da Gama's Voyage and Display of European Prejudice against Africa

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## Economics

Vasco da Gama's crew already knew that gold, ivory, and spices were not available in São Braz so they only stopped by to meet their needs for meat and water.

The Europeans make the trade to give three copper bracelets for a fat, black ox. The Europeans looked down upon the Africans because they did not understand the value of the natural resources at their disposal. The Africans should have acquired more than three hastily made, cheap bracelets but the Portuguese took advantage of the African's lack of knowledge of market prices. The Africans also had no choice but to accept the trade as the Europeans had displayed their weapons and showed that they had the means of harming them.

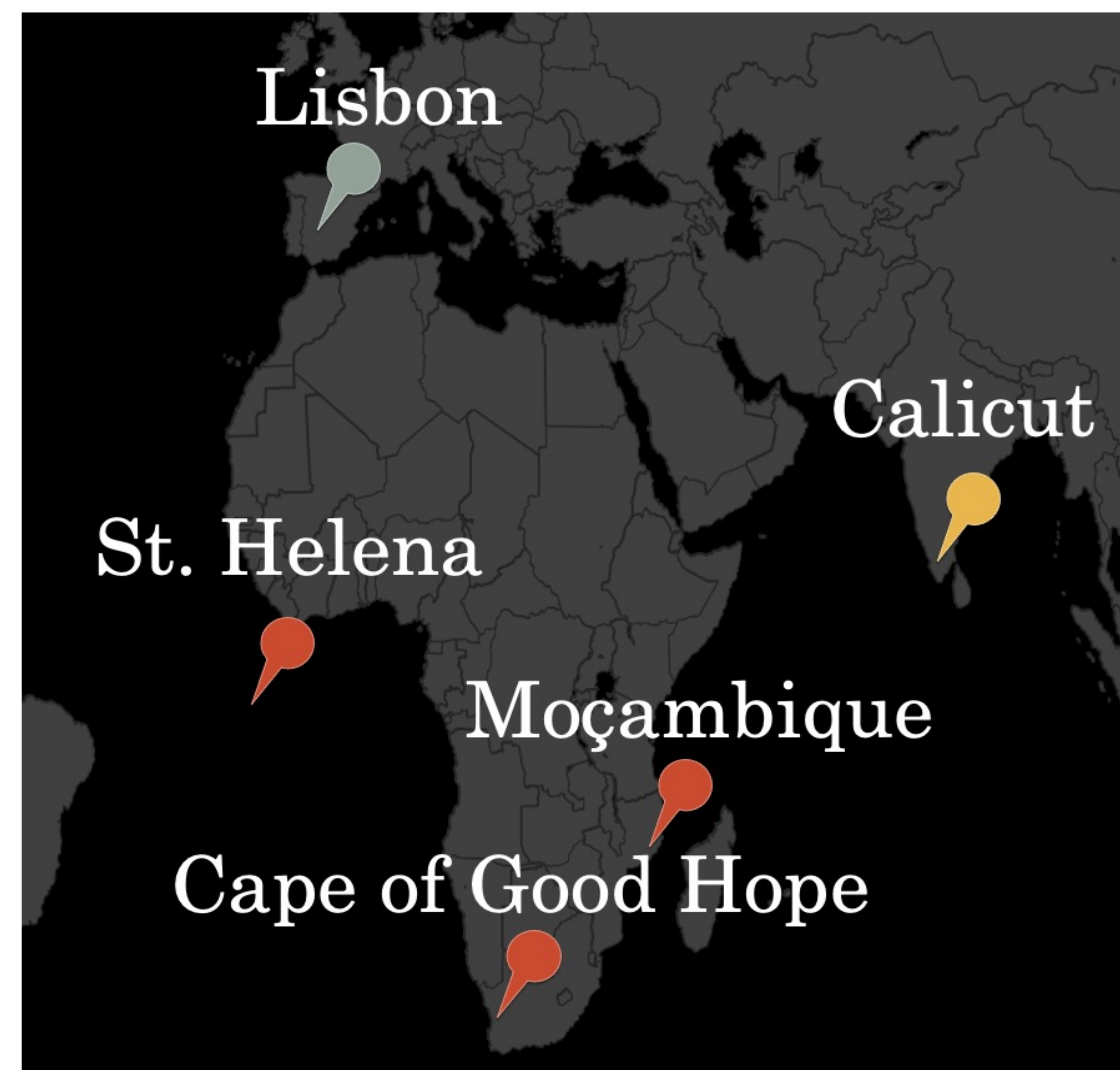
The crew's European superiority is shown through the lack of concern during the financial exploitation of the Africans.

These themes of Eurocentric and Christian superiority carried over to the Portuguese's interactions with the Indians which can be seen by the failure of the crew to prepare adequate gifts for the Indian rulers. Additionally, they misidentified Hindu temples for Christian churches. They also violated the customs of Calicut due to an unwarranted fear of their military.

## Military

After the crew received a warm welcome in St. Helena and had a feast prepared for their crew, they pushed their limits by following the Africans back to their homes in curiosity about the natives' private lives. This led the Africans to attack, which in turn led Vasco da Gama's crew to ensure that they displayed their military superiority against other Africans by displaying their lances, assegais, crossbows, and breastplates.

The crew would continue their abysmal treatment and maintained compliance through the threat of force.



## Religion

Vasco da Gama's crew had been predominantly made up of Christian Portuguese who had desires to spread their faith overseas. Vasco da Gama's crew still looked down upon these African people as sinners and heretics for not following Christianity.

The Mohammedans had initially mistaken the crew for Turks or Moors, and for this reason, treated the Portuguese with hospitality. The crew's identity was quickly revealed as they recited their prayers and attempted to spread the ideals of Christianity in Moçambique. Vasco da Gama's crew had no concern for the Muslim religion widely practiced in the state as the Portuguese proclaimed other religions as blasphemous.

Once the Sheikh learned about this, trouble started between the two groups as the African Muslims claimed Vasco da Gama's crew had committed acts of treachery in their nation.

## References

- Unknown. "A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco Da Gama, 1497-1499." Translated by E.G. Ravenstein. The Project Gutenberg. The Hakluyt Society, no. 99, 1898.