

St Helena Day

By Ian Bruce*

Proclaimed as a public holiday in 1945, St Helena Day on 21 May is a significant date in the island's social calendar.¹ Important events deliberately timed to occur on this national holiday include the restoration of full British passports on the island's quincentenary in 2002 and the forthcoming official opening of the new airport in 2016.² For the past nine years, much of the day's festivities have been organised by the New Horizons youth group with parades, raffles, market stalls, music and fireworks. It is likewise observed by Saints overseas, congratulations are sent each year from other Overseas Territories and organisations such as the RSPB and Kew Gardens, whilst the Foreign and Commonwealth Office also occasionally remember the day when it flies the island flag above its building.³



Island “birthday celebrations”, 21 May 2011

Why the 21 May Date is Problematic

All these activities mark the discovery of the island on 21 May 1502, the feast-day of *Saint Helena*[†], by the four ships of the third Portuguese Armada to India, commanded by João da Nova.⁴ However, there is a well-known discrepancy between this date and this feast-day. Had da Nova been a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, he would indeed have marked *Saint Helena* on 21 May, but he was Catholic and the Roman Church has long celebrated this saint on 18 August. There is no obvious reason why the Catholic Portuguese discoverers would use an Orthodox Church liturgical calendar when naming the island.

There has been a tendency for publications to highlight the discrepancy, but then not to provide an explanation. For example, the Encyclopaedia Britannica states: “The island was discovered on May

* The original version was published by The Friends of St Helena [Ian Bruce, ‘St Helena Day’, *Wirebird The Journal of the Friends of St Helena*, no. 44 (2015): 32–46.]. This revised and updated text was issued on 28 September 2015.

† For purposes of clarity, the island name is written as “St Helena” and the saint’s name in italics as “*Saint Helena*”.

21, 1502, which in the Orthodox Church is the feast-day of *Saint Helena*, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine”.⁵ Bishop Cannan was clearly troubled by the problem, devoting two pages of his South Atlantic church history to the issue.⁶ He offered two solutions. First, he found a handwritten note, probably by his predecessor Bishop Holbech, in the margin of a copy of Melliss’s description of the island held at the Bishopsholme library suggesting it was named after another saint altogether, St Helen, Virgin of Auxerre in France. Cannan expressed some reservation about this idea, and was right to do so. Quite apart from the obscurity of this saint, Bishop Holbech had the wrong date, both Roman and Orthodox Churches marking the feast-day for Saint Helen on 22 May, not 21 May.⁷

Cannan was more attracted by a second idea, put to him by Ronald Jasper (Dean of York, 1975-84). Arguing that the Greeks heavily affected the Iberian Peninsula during the late medieval and early Reformation period, Jasper wrote, “I think it would be extremely likely that this Greek influence will undoubtedly be the reason why the 21st May is the date observed”. This explanation seems wholly unconvincing. It is difficult to find any evidence that Greeks crewed the early Portuguese ships; it is also hard to conceive of a situation arising where Hellenic influence was so great that da Nova felt obliged to give up his Catholic liturgical calendar in favour of the Orthodox Church.

As an alternative to Cannan’s ideas, if the island was indeed discovered on 21 May, only one connection is perceived, albeit an unlikely one, between this date and *Saint Helena* that conforms to da Nova’s Catholicism. The Roman Church celebrates 21 May as the feast-day of her son, the Roman emperor Saint Constantine the Great, along with another 20 saints.⁸ The obvious name for the newly found island would then have been Ilha de Saint Constantine (Saint Constantine Island). Maybe da Nova preferred to name it after Constantine’s mother! However, this explanation does not seem credible and this paper therefore seeks to find a convincing explanation for the paradox of the date of 21 May. The most effective way to do this seems to be to establish where this date originated.

Origin of the 21 May Date

Many histories of the island state it was discovered on the 21 May 1502 but none has been found that provides an actual source for this date. Presuming it was first mentioned in one of the early Portuguese accounts, an unsuccessful search was made for a specific discovery date in works by João de Barros⁹, Gaspar Corrêa¹⁰, Luiz de Figuerido Falcão¹¹, Damião de Góis¹², Fernão [Lopes] de Castanheda¹³, Diogo de Couto¹⁴, Manuel de Faria e Sousa¹⁵ and Ignacio da Costa Quintella.¹⁶ Several histories have suggested the island was one of Portugal’s great secrets, yet the earliest surviving mention of St Helena in print comes from a Dutch book and a number of non-Portuguese charts showing the location of the island were published over the next century. The first book described a visit to the island in 1505 by Albericus, probably Albericus Vespuccius, and provided a rough location of the island, but mentioned nothing about how or when it was discovered.¹⁷ Searching non-Portuguese sources still further, the earliest quotation found for the 21 May date so far found was published nearly a century after the island’s discovery, and this was in yet another Dutch book.

Jan Hüygen van Linschoten was a Dutch merchant and traveller, probably born at Linschoten, a village near the town of Haarlem in the province of Utrecht. The 1595 colourised portrait below states he was 32, suggesting he was born about 1563.¹⁸ He worked as Secretary to the Archbishop of Goa, Dominican Vicente da Fonseca from 1583-1587.¹⁹ Following the death of his patron, he set sail for Lisbon in January 1589, arriving at St Helena on 12 May where he spent nine days. After leaving the island, he was delayed for two years at the Azores. He then worked several more years in Portugal before finally returning to Holland. There is considerable ambiguity about Linschoten’s religion. He is usually described as Protestant, especially on web sites, but Linschoten was actually raised as a Catholic. As a youth, at the height of hostility to Catholicism by Dutch Calvinists he left his homeland for Spain and later moved to Portugal. He presumably remained a Catholic when he later worked at India but on his eventual return to Holland, he joined the Protestant Dutch Reformed Church.²⁰

It was at Holland in 1596 that he wrote and published an account of his observations and travels.²¹ Such was its importance an English translation was published within two years.²² The section on St Helena provides a detailed description of the island at a time when it was a key replenishment depot

for the Portuguese on their home voyage from India and the Far East. Of particular relevance to St Helena Day is Linschoten's opening and closing sentences, quoted from the 1598 English translation:



Jan Huygen van Linschoten

“The island of Saint Helena is so named because the Portingales discovered it uppon Saint Helens day which is the twentie one of May”.

“The 21 May, being St Helens day, and Whitsunday, after we had taken in all our fresh water, and other necessaries, we set sayle altogether in companie, and directed our course to Portingall, leaving about fifteen men in the island, and some slaves that ran out of the ships.”

A Solution to the Paradox

Linschoten's second statement, mentioning both the feast-day for *Saint Helena* and Whitsunday in the same context, prompts a question. Which liturgical calendar was he using - Catholic, Orthodox Christian or Protestant? Whitsunday (or Pentecost) is seven Sundays after Easter for all three faiths. In 1589, Catholics and Protestants celebrated Easter on 2 April. A glance at the calendar shows that these two faiths would indeed have celebrated Whitsunday on 21 May, just as stated by Linschoten.²³ The Orthodox Church calculates Easter differently however, and their Whitsunday would have been a week later, the 28 May. There would have been other differences too, Protestants and the Orthodox Church both marking the feast-day of *Saint Helena* on the 21 May whilst Catholics doing so on 18 August. The differences on 21 May 1589 can be summarised as follows:

- Catholics would have celebrated Whitsunday but not *Saint Helena*, her feast-day falling on 18 August.
- Orthodox Christians would have celebrated the feast-day of *Saint Helena* but not Whitsunday, which was a week later on 28 May.
- However, Protestants would indeed have celebrated both *Saint Helena Day and Whitsunday*, exactly as described by Linschoten.

If Linschoten was indeed the first to quote the date of 21 May, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, he seems to have employed the Protestant liturgical calendar, which is perhaps unsurprising given he was a member of the Dutch Reformed Church when he wrote his book in Holland. Incidentally, historians have been remarkably lucky with the timing of Linschoten's departure from St Helena. It is not just that Whitsunday was memorable because he happened to sail from St Helena that day, but also in 1589 the Catholic and Protestant Whitsunday fell on 21 May. That did not often happen - Whitsunday is a moveable feast-day, and only fell on this date three times in the 16th century, in 1553, 1564 and, crucially, in 1589. Because he was on the island that year, Linschoten wrote about two feast-days, not just one. This rare coincidence has allowed the Protestant feast-day for *Saint Helena* to be clearly differentiated from the Orthodox Church feast-day on the same date.

The second important conclusion stems from the fact that the island has always been known as "St Helena"/"Santa Helena" since its first discovery in 1502. This was several decades before the start of the Reformation in the 1520s and the establishment of Protestantism. It has already been demonstrated that Linschoten quoted the Protestant date for the feast-day for *Saint Helena*. Since Protestantism did not exist as a faith when the island was first found, it can categorically be stated that the island was *NOT* so named because it was discovered on the Protestant feast-day for *Saint Helena* of 21 May. Linschoten's Protestant feast-day date of the 21 May for the discovery of the island therefore seems to be mistaken.

Linschoten's Errors

It is thought that Linschoten made two assumptions when he quoted the date of 21 May, of which the first was possibly wrong and the second certainly so. First, Linschoten presumed the island was found on the feast-day of *Saint Helena*. Certainly, the Portuguese named most of their land discoveries after the feast-day of the saint on which they were found, but some rules are made to be broken. For example, Bahai da Santa Elena (St Helena Bay) near Cape Town was first seen and named by Vasco da Gama on 7 November 1497, this date having nothing at all to do with *Saint Helena*. However, she is the patron saint of new discoveries, so da Gama may not have been tied to any specific date.²⁴ Again, when Pedro Álvares Cabral, leader of the second Portuguese India Armada, first sighted the Brazilian coastline on 22 April 1500 it was thought to be a large island. However, it was only named Ilha de Vera Cruz (Island of the True Cross) because Cabral left Brazil on the next stage of his voyage to India on 3 May, the feast-day of the True Cross.²⁵

Linschoten's other assumption relates to the fact that he mistakenly quoted the Protestant rather than the Catholic date for *Saint Helena* Day. When writing his book in Holland some years after his stay at St Helena in 1589, having assumed the island must have been discovered on the feast-day, he must have looked up the feast-day for *Saint Helena* and found the Protestant date of 21 May. His wording does suggest that he only established the date of *Saint Helena's* feast-day when writing his book: "The island of Saint Helena is so named because the Portingales discovered it uppon Saint Helens day which is the twentie one of May". He presumably did not know Catholics celebrate *Saint Helena* on 18 August. This was only a tiny error; nevertheless, this mistake has echoed across more than four centuries, all the way down to the present day.

Given that Linschoten should have quoted 18 August, how realistic is this as a discovery date? One of the few near-certain facts about Da Nova's discovery fleet is that it returned to Lisbon on 11 September 1502. Calculations show that even if da Nova left for Lisbon on the same day as he discovered the island, his fleet then needed to sail five to six times faster on the second stage of the home voyage from St Helena to Lisbon compared with the first stage from India to St Helena. This seems improbable. Any delay before leaving, for example to replenish water stocks or to explore the island, only worsened the situation, necessitating a still faster voyage to Lisbon.²⁶ Thus, had Linschoten quoted the 18 August, this would probably have been too late in the year for da Nova's discovery fleet to get back to Lisbon by 11 September.

In short, not only is it concluded that Linschoten was mistaken when he quoted the Protestant feast-day for *Saint Helena* on 21 May, but the Roman Church's feast-day date of 18 August also seems unlikely.

Origin of Island Name and Likely Discovery Dates

It is perfectly possible that no feast-day was involved when da Nova named the island. Several scenarios can be imagined. For example, the island may have been so named because *Saint Helena* is the patron saint of new discoveries. Da Nova may even have named the island after a female relative called Helena. Alexander Schulenburg suggested in 1999 that the island might not have been found on any of *Saint Helena*'s feast-days, but for a different reason.²⁷ Commenting that the island, unlike many others, has always been known by its original name, in whichever language and spelling it was written, he suggested early writers attempted to square the island's name with a suitable date. The assumption was therefore made that it was discovered on one of the feast-days of *Saint Helena*. He believed this was mere conjecture. He also suggested that the island was named in association with St Helena Bay in Southern Africa, which was visited and named by Vasco da Gama on 7 November 1498 and which faces the island to its northwest. If any of these possibilities are true, the date of discovery is thrown wide open.



The timeless *Saint Helena* aged 80 with the True Cross²⁸

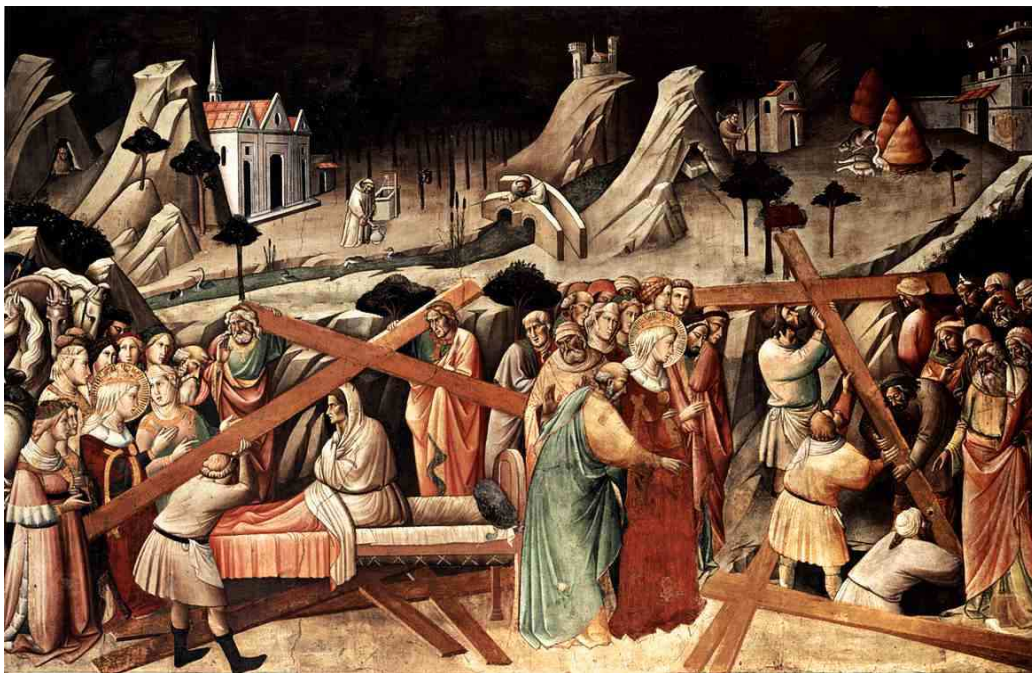
An island web site by John Turner edged close to the starting point of this paper's reasoning, when it drew attention to the fact that Anglicans and Lutherans mark *Saint Helena*'s feast-day on 21 May, also pointing to the implausibility that the discovery fleet could discover the island on 18 August and yet arrive back at Lisbon by 11 September.²⁹ From the perspective of the discovery fleet's speed, depending on precisely when it left India, my own generalised calculations suggest the island could realistically have been found over a period of at least 90 days, between mid-April and mid-July.³⁰ This

of course includes Linschoten's date of 21 May, but every other date within that period seems equally likely.

Linschoten was not alone in the 16th century to quote a date for the discovery of St Helena, even if only his suggestion of 21 May is still remembered. Attention is drawn to a feast-day that is specifically Catholic, is closely connected to *Saint Helena* and which was also suggested slightly ahead of Linschoten. Odoardo Duarte Lopes visited St Helena in 1578, more than a decade before Linschoten. He was a Portuguese slaver who spent many years in the Congo.³¹ A book published in 1591 by Filippo Pigafetta, an Italian with experience in both military and diplomatic fields, described Portuguese trade in the Congo and the wider African continent based on details provided by Lopes.³² This included many interesting details, including the fact that Francis Drake probably sailed in the region of St Helena, so he may even have landed there before Thomas Cavendish.³³ On the subject of St Helena Day, translating from the original Italian the book states:

“This island is so called from having been first discovered by the Portuguese on the 3rd of May, the Feast of St Helena”.³⁴

It is not known where Lopes sourced this date and, at first sight, his statement seems wrong, the Roman Church celebrating 3 May as the feast of the True Cross, not the feast of *Saint Helena*. However, this Catholic feast-day certainly has a strong resonance with *Saint Helena* because it celebrates her claimed recovery of the cross on which Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, if the Portuguese indeed discovered the island on the feast of the True Cross, why did they not name it “Ilha de Vera Cruz” (Island of the True Cross)? The answer may be very simple, for as mentioned above, in 1500 Cabral had already given this name to the Brazilian coastline. News of Cabral's discovery reached Lisbon directly from South America before da Nova's fleet set off on the voyage to India in 1501. If da Nova knew the True Cross name had already been assigned, the most obvious and plausible alternative name for him to give the island was “Santa Helena”. In short, a 3 May discovery date and the island name fits the normal Portuguese practice of naming new lands after the feast-day on which they were found and also falls into the most likely 90-day period for the discovery, as discussed above.



A myriad of choices - *Saint Helena* selects the True Cross³⁵

Only time and further research will confirm whether Lopes and Linschoten were indeed the first to respectively quote 3 May and 21 May for St Helena's discovery. With each of these dates being

quoted in the 16th century, it is odd that the 3 May was only rarely cited in the years that followed. Indeed, the 3 May was quoted in a widely read travel book by Sir Thomas Herbert in 1638 so it is surprising how quickly his comments were forgotten. Herbert described how, after touring through Persia and Iraq, he returned to England via the Cape, and visited St Helena for six days from 10 October 1629. His comments are important because he explicitly linked the discovery of St Helena on 3 May to *Saint Helena* and her discovery of the True Cross.

“*Saint Helena* is an Ile, & and was in-nominate [unnamed] till John de Nova gave it one [...] and so named, for that he discovered it (in his returne from India to Lisbon) the third of May; a day consecrated to the memory of Helena the Emperesse: She that first found the Crosse.”³⁶

Regretfully, these remarks by Thomas Herbert were largely ignored because later English language texts overwhelmingly claimed that St Helena was discovered on the 21 May. A search of the literature suggests that the 3 May was last cited as the island’s discovery date about 150 years ago, but no mention was made of the crucial fact that this was the feast-day of the True Cross.³⁷ It is suspected the 3 May date completely fell out of favour following publication of the first complete history of St Helena. This was written by Thomas Brooke in 1808 and emphatically stated, albeit without providing a source, that St Helena was discovered on 21 May.³⁸ Together with his second revised edition published in 1823,³⁹ Brooke heavily influenced the texts of later historians, including his several errors. Within a short time thereafter, all memory of Lopes’ Catholic date of 3 May seems to have completely faded so that only Linschoten’s Protestant date of 21 May is today recognised.

To summarise, evidence has been presented that shows the traditional date of 21 May for the discovery of St Helena originated with a Dutch author at the end of the 16th century who erroneously quoted the Protestant feast-day of *Saint Helena* for a discovery made by Catholic navigators two decades before the Reformation started. The Catholic feast-day of the True Cross on 3 May probably better fits the historic facts of when the island was discovered. The islanders have however long marked St Helena Day on 21 May for their national celebrations. This is a deep-rooted tradition, and any suggestion to change the timing of that festivity would probably be akin to a proposal to change the date of Christmas.

Notes and Acknowledgements

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¹ *Public Holidays Ordinance (No 9)*, 1945. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/oyffwwf>.

² ‘Editorial’, *St Helena Independent*, 22 May 2015, 4.

³ Simon Pipe, ‘Napoleon Rides down Main Street: St Helena’s Day 2013’, *The St Helena Independent*, 24 May 2013, Vol VIII, 24 edition, 7; Nick Stevens, ‘St Helena Day 2014 - With a Bang’, *The St Helena Independent*, 23 May 2014, Vol IX, 24 edition, 6–8.

⁴ So elusive and contradictory are the details of João da Nova’s overall expedition, largely because no first-hand account was kept, that questions have been raised since the 1940s whether this expedition actually found St Helena - for the purposes of this paper, all doubts are put to one side and it is assumed da Nova indeed made the discovery. [Damião Peres, *História dos Descobrimentos Portugueses* (Oporto: Portucalense Editora, 1943), 448. Duarte Leite, *Historia Dos Descobrimentos*, vol. II (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1960), 206, 252–253. E. Roukema, ‘Brazil in the Cantino Map’, *Imago Mundi*, 17 (1963), 7–26 (p. 16); Harold Livermore, ‘Santa Helena, A Forgotten Portuguese Discovery’, *Estudios Em Homenagem a Luís António de Oliveira Ramos*, 2004, 623–631. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/k4lytzd>]. A. H. Schulenburg, ‘The Discovery of St Helena: The Search Continues’, *Wirebird The Journal of the Friends of St Helena* 24 (2002): 13–19.

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- ⁵ ‘*Saint Helena* (island, Atlantic Ocean): History’, Encyclopaedia Britannica. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/louub8u>.
- ⁶ Edward Cannan, *Churches of the South Atlantic Islands, 1502-1991*. (Oswestry: Nelson, 1992), 23–25.
- ⁷ Saint Helen of Auxerre: URL Roman Church: <http://tinyurl.com/nxgkj4s>; URL Eastern Orthodox Church: <http://tinyurl.com/lol8745>. The Roman Catholic Church also marks the feast-day of two other similarly named saints. *Saint Helena*, Benedictine abbess of Ohren Abbey in Trier, Germany, also called Heliada, on 20 June. St. Helen of Skovde, Martyred noblewoman of Sweden on 31 July. Livermore referred to the feast-day of a third saint, Helena the Virgin, on the 15 April but she has not been found. He also incorrectly stated the feast-day for *Saint Helena*, queen and mother of Constantine, was on 22 May [Livermore, ‘Santa Helena, A Forgotten Portuguese Discovery’, 626].
- ⁸ URL: <http://tinyurl.com/lveosp7>.
- ⁹ João de Barros, Manoel Severim de Faria, and João Baptista Lavanha, *Da Asia de João de Barros e de Diogo de Couto*, Nova Ediçã, vol. I, book V, chapter X (Lisbon: Regia Officina Typografica, 1778), 477. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/lebc6b>. The following passage from the original Portuguese text is quoted in full because it differs in some detail with an earlier version published in this magazine based on a German translation [Schulenburg, ‘Wirebird’, 13–19.]: “Finally João da Nova left a few more men with Payo Rodrigues on the orders of the King, left Cananor with more cargo that he received there, and on the course of Mount Liz, captured a Moorish ship that was from Calicut. João da Nova departed from the coast of India, with many victories, and good fortune, that God gave him, he made his way to this kingdom; and on the way, passed the Cape of Good Hope, had more good fortune, that God showed him, a very small island which he named Santa Helena and took on water, having done so twice since leaving India, once in Melinde, the other in Moçambique. It appears that God created that island, in that place to give life to so many men that come from India; since after it was found and until today, everybody tries to make landfall there since it has the best water on the whole journey, however great their need on the way back from India. It is such that the ships that go there are saved, navigated there by their necessity and the refreshment the island offers, as we will see further on, justifying this place. Leaving the place, Joaõ da Nova arrived in this kingdom on the 11 September 1502, where the King received him with great honours for everything he achieved as a noble and in the prudence of the business he carried out”.
- ¹⁰ Gaspar Corrêa and Rodrigo José de Lima Felner, *Lendas da India*, [Edited by R. J. de Lima Felner], vol. Vol 1 Part 1 (Lisbon: Typ. da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1858), 235. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/o38xp73>.
- ¹¹ Luiz de Figuerido Falcão, *Livro em que se contém toda a fazenda e real patrimonio dos reinos de Portugal, India, e ilhas adjacentes e outras particularidades* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1859), 138. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/n2xwoj2>.
- ¹² Damião de Góis, *Chronica do serenissimo Senhor Rei D. Manoel* (Lisbon: Na Officina de Miguel Manescal da Costa, 1749), 85. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/na9cgdj>. It is suspected that the following translation from the original Portuguese is the first time de Góis’ description of St Helena’s discovery has been published: “From there, João da Nova left without returning to Cananor since he had already taken leave of the King and the Portuguese who lived in the city. He made course for Monte Delli and captured a ship from Calicut which, after sacking it, was burned. From there he went to Melinde then from Melinde to Moçambique then passed the Cape of Good Hope, came to an island which he named ‘Santa Helena’ where he took on water, a fertile though small island very useful for those ships that came across it for the good water, fruit and meat found there, from there he sailed to Lisbon with his fleet on the xi of September, fifteen hundred and two where he was received by the King and all the city with great pleasure for the good trip accomplished and the islands discovered”.
- ¹³ Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses*, New Edition, vol. I (Lisbon: Typographia Rollandiana, 1833), 126. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/kekpuwp>.
- ¹⁴ Barros, Faria, and Lavanha, *Da Asia de João de Barros*, I, book V, chapter X:118. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/n8qodqe>.
- ¹⁵ De Manuel e Faria e Sousa, *Asia Portuguesa*, vol. I (Lisbon: En la officina de Henrique Valente de Oliueira, 1666), 50.
- ¹⁶ Ignacio da Costa Quintella, *Annaes da Marinha Portuguesa*, vol. I (Lisbon: Na Typografia da Mesma Academia [Real das Sciencias], 1839), 259.
- ¹⁷ Amerigo Vespucci, *The Voyage from Lisbon to India, 1505-6, Being an Account and Journal by Albericus Vespuccius, Translated from the Contemporary Flemish [by George Frederick Barwick and Janet M. E. Barwick], and Edited with Prologue and Notes by C. H. Coote. [With the Text of the Original Entitled ‘Die Reyse vā Lissebone’ in Facsimile.]*, trans. George Frederick Barwick and Janet Mary Edna Barwick (London: B. F. Stevens, 1894), 18.
- ¹⁸ Jan Huygen van Linschoten, A. C. (Arthur Coke) Burnell, and Pieter Anton Tiele, *The voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies: from the old English translation of 1598: the first book, containing his description of the East* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1885), xxiii. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/mumtyl9>.
- ¹⁹ Cornelis Koeman, *Jan Huygen Van Linschoten* (Coimbra, Portugal: UC Biblioteca Geral 1, 1984). URL: <http://tinyurl.com/lpssxg4>.
- ²⁰ Carmen Nocentelli, *Empires of Love: Europe, Asia, and the Making of Early Modern Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 70. Hans Derks, *History of the Opium Problem: The Assault on the East, Ca. 1600-1950*, Sinica Leidensia, v. 105 (Leiden: Brill ; Biggleswade, 2012), 26. Michael Wayne Cole and Rebecca Zorach, eds., *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 271. J. Zeeberg and I. R. Stone, ‘Into the Ice Sea: Barents’ Wintering on Novaya Zemlya - a Renaissance Voyage of Discovery’, *The Polar Record.*, no. 219 (2005): 65.
- ²¹ Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huygen Van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien, inhoudende een corte beschryvinghe der selver landen ende zee-custen... waer by ghevoecht zijn niet alleen die conterfeytsels van de habytten, drachten ende wesen, so van de Portugesen aldaer residerende als van de ingeboornen Indianen*. (C. Claesz, 1596). URL: <http://tinyurl.com/k6dzr24>.
- ²² Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *John Huighen Van Linschoten, His Discours of Voyages Into Ye Easte [and] West Indies: Divided Into Foure Bookes* (London: John Wolfe, 1598). URL: <http://tinyurl.com/om44trc>.
- ²³ URL: <http://tinyurl.com/ltru447>.

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- ²⁴ E. G. Ravenstein, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco Da Gama, 1497-1499* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/psofz7h>. *Saint Helena* is widely described as the patron saint of new discoveries, plus a miscellany of other subjects - archaeologists, converts, difficult marriages, divorces and empresses. URL: <http://saints.sqpn.com/saint-helena/> URL: <http://tinyurl.com/nwt8gzo>.
- ²⁵ Corrêa and Felner, *Lendas da Índia*, [Edited by R. J. de Lima Felner], Vol 1 Part 1:152. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/k342u38>.
- ²⁶ It is not known precisely when João da Nova left India. Almost his last action was a naval battle at Cannanore, although considerable disagreement surrounds its date. João de Barros was alone in thinking it took place early in da Nova's voyage (probably about November 1501) sailing from Cannanor to Cochin [Barros, Faria, and Lavanha, *Da Asia de João de Barros*, I, book V, chapter X:477]. Castanheda [Castanheda, *Historia do descobrimento*, I:128. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/mbtzcoz>] and Góis [Góis, *Chronica do serenissimo Senhor Rei D. Manoel*, 84. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/kk86de1>] both stated the battle was on 16-17 December. Saturnino Monteiro suggested it happened on 31 December [Armando da Silva Saturnino Monteiro, *Batalhas e Combates da Marinha Portuguesa (1139-1625)* (Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa Editora, 1989), 84.]. Da Nova also sacked and destroyed a merchant ship from Calicut before leaving India. Calculations assume he left India sometime between 15 December 1501 and 31 January 1502 - voyages across the Indian Ocean were difficult after January because of a reversal in the direction of the Monsoon winds. At the other end of da Nova's home voyage, there is general agreement that all his ships arrived back at Lisbon on 11 September 1502. The total distance sailed was about 9,500 nautical miles, comprising about 6,000 nautical miles from India to St Helena and a further 3,500 nautical miles from St Helena to Lisbon. These sea distances have been sourced from <http://www.sea-distances.org/> and should only be regarded as indicative because the precise routes taken by the early Portuguese armadas are uncertain. If da Nova discovered St Helena on 18 August, depending on precisely when he left India, the first stage of his voyage took 199-247 days and his ships achieved an average speed, including stops for food and water, of only 1.0-1.25 knots. However, for the second stage of his voyage, to sail from St Helena on 18 August and arrive at Lisbon by 11 September (24 days) his ships would have needed to achieve a dramatic increase in speed to 6.1 knots. A more general calculation is described below in reference 30.
- ²⁷ Alexander Hugo Schulenburg, 'Transient Observations: The Textualizing of St Helena through Five Hundred Years of Colonial Discourse' (University of St Andrews, 1999), 165. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/q8329mw>.
- ²⁸ *Saint Helena* by Giovanni Battista Cima in 1495, a panel painting displayed at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. URL: <http://sainthelenaisland.info/briefhistory.htm>.
- ²⁹ The generalised calculation assumes the dates and distances in note 26 above, and also that the ratio of speeds between the voyage from India to St Helena compared with St Helena to Lisbon falls in the range 2:1 - 1:2. For a 15 December 1501 departure from India, the earliest and latest discovery dates would respectively be 19 April and 12 July. For a 31 January 1502 departure, the corresponding dates would be 14 May and 22 July.
- ³¹ Wim Klooster, *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009), 173. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/kaynn76>.
- ³² Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, *Relatione del Reame di Congo et delle circonvicine contrade tratta dalli scritti & ragionamenti di Odoardo Lope[S] Portoghese / per Filippo Pigafetta con disegni vari di geografiadi pianti, d'habiti d'animali, & altro*. (Rome: BGrassi, 1591). URL: <http://tinyurl.com/ku4ellc>. The 3rd page of the original Italian text states that St Helena (S Elena) was discovered on 3 May (3. di Maggio). John Coleman De Graft-Johnson, *African Glory: The Story of Vanished Negro Civilizations* (Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1986), 134. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/p7k5dlv>.
- ³³ Robin Castell, *Drake and Saint Helena* (The Castell Collection St Helena, 2004), 72-86.
- ³⁴ Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the Surrounding Countries; Drawn out of the Writings and Discourses of the Portuguese, Duarte Lope[S]*, trans. Margarite Hutchinson (London: John Murray, 1881), 9-10. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/lpseb7x>.
- ³⁵ Fresco by Agnolo Gaddi circa 1385-87, located at the chancel chapel of Santa Croce, Florence. The joy of discovering the cross was short-lived, two others also being found nearby. The fresco portrays how the True Cross was identified by a seriously ill noblewoman who was touched by each crucifix, one of which cured her [Ted Byfield, *The Christians. Their First Two Thousand Years. By This Sign: A.D. 250 to 350: From the Decian Persecution to the Constantine Era* (The University of Calgary: Christian History Project, 2003), 249. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/oqcs1gn>.
- ³⁶ Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels into Africa et Asia the Great: Especially Describing the Famous Empires of Persia and Industant as Also Divers Other Kingdoms in the Orientall Indies and I'les Adjacent* (Jacob Blome & Richard Bishop, 1638), 353. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/pa2bvc6>. Schulenburg, 'Transient Observations', 149.
- ³⁷ Philip Alexander Prince, *Parallel History: Being an Outline of the History and Biography of the World, Contemporaneously Arranged* (Whittaker, 1843), 264. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/pnw74fn>. *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. 30 (London: J. Murray, 1860), 261. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/pgqzyza>.
- ³⁸ Thomas Henry Brooke, *History of the Island of St. Helena, from Its Discovery by the Portuguese to the Year 1806*, 1st Edition (London: Black, Parry and Kingsbury, 1808), 35. This edition incorrectly stated that St Helena was discovered in 1501 rather than 1502, an error that may have originated from inaccurate 18th century descriptions of St Helena [e.g. Adam Anderson, *An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce, from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time. Containing an History of the Great Commercial Interests of the British Empire*, vol. II (London: J. Walter, 1787), 527. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/plcose5>].
- ³⁹ Thomas Henry Brooke, *History of the Island of St. Helena, from Its Discovery by the Portuguese to the Year 1823*, 2nd Edition (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1824), 46. URL: <http://tinyurl.com/p85rzmo>.