

<b>Institution:</b> Queen Mary University of London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 27 English Language and Literature		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Mapping Global Histories: Visualising Geopolitics and Cultural Exchange, from the Ancient World through the Present		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2002-17		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Jerry Brotton	Professor of Renaissance Studies	Sept 2003-Present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Professor Brotton's research has reconceptualised historical mapping as both practice and metaphor for global cultural exchange. It has brought new perspectives to how maps are accessed and used by stakeholders in the UK and internationally, including general publics, museum and heritage professionals, theatre makers, artists and arts organisations, and indigenous communities in Brazil. Brotton's research on mapping has led to impact in four areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing methods of interpretation and conservation in the library and museum sectors</li> <li>• facilitating creative and artistic practice and production, including the use of digital technologies</li> <li>• increasing cultural participation in and enhancing public understanding of mapping</li> <li>• furthering community development and regeneration through cultural preservation</li> </ul> <p>By identifying how maps are subjective and situated within specific cultural contexts, his research has enabled cultural organisations, museums and curators, and other stakeholders to display and reinterpret maps in ways that challenge dominant western, scientific approaches and engage new and existing audiences.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Brotton's body of work engages with the intersections of cartographic and mapping practices, history, literature, public culture, and digital mediation. His research [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5] reveals how maps, as historical technologies and means of imagining geopolitical space [3.1, 3.2], have shaped transhistorical narratives about empire and cultural exchange in Europe [3.3], the Islamic world [3.2, 3.3], and South America [3.2, 3.4], and continue to inform contemporary spatial imaginaries [3.4, 3.5]. It de-centres European spaces and cultures in narratives of exploration from the Renaissance onwards and reframes histories of encounter and exchange through non-European perspectives (particularly Islam) [3.3] and recent critical theories of the 'spatial turn' and cognitive mapping [3.4]. Offering new insights to contemporary global networks through remappings of Britain's relationship to Europe, the Muslim world, and the Americas [3.2, 3.3], Brotton's research has transformed understanding of Anglo-Islamic and global exchanges between European, Islamic, and indigenous South American cultures c.1500–1700.</p> <p>Brotton's work [3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5] examines the methodological and epistemological potential of digital technologies for the advancement and application of maps and mapping. This research demonstrates how social, political and religious contexts have underpinned the creation of maps and their applications within a variety of 'real world' contexts, from the early modern period to contemporary digital culture. In collaboration with the digital mediation studio Factum Arte, an interdisciplinary team of artists, technicians, and conservators based in Madrid led by Adam Lowe, Brotton has explored the use and implications of emerging digital technologies to recreate, preserve, reinterpret and re-present historical maps and locations, as tools that can initiate political change and environmental transformation [3.1, 3.4]. His work</p>		

identified both the political usages of mapping, and how contemporary digital mapping can be appropriated and used by marginalised communities to change their surroundings and challenge how they have been mapped through history. This strand of the research has further exposed the narrative capabilities of maps, that is, their capacity to reveal the complicated cultural exchanges and sometimes hidden histories of which they are both representation and product. By identifying how maps are subjective and situated within specific cultural contexts, his research has enabled museums and curators to display and reinterpret maps in ways that challenge dominant western, scientific approaches and engage new audiences.

Brotton's interrogation of mapping as practice and metaphor for the histories of global cultural exchange and the creation of social and political space and place (nations, empires, and colonies) produced subsequent work that locates early modern drama within the complex geopolitical structures of the period. Having identified a dynamic east-west exchange in mapmaking in the early modern period, Brotton shows how the cultural exchanges evidenced in visual and graphic culture map onto literary texts, especially Elizabethan drama. Using original archival diplomatic, commercial and literary material, Brotton's book *This Orient Isle* [3.3] offered the first comprehensive account of Elizabethan England's relationship with the Muslim world and how it continues to shape the history of Islam in Britain. It examines how cross-cultural identity is created in literary works by figures such as Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It enabled theatre practitioners in English Touring Theatre to create new versions of canonical texts (*Othello*) and curators at Dr Johnson's House to revive neglected texts and histories (Johnson's *Irene* and preceding Anglo-Arabic history).

### 3. References to the research

[3.1] Cini Foundation. (18, Sep, 2011). Brotton, J. *Penelope's Labour: Weaving Words and Images* [Exhibition catalogue]. Venice, Italy.

[3.2] Brotton, J. (2012). *A History of the World in Twelve Maps*. Allen Lane. [doi.org/10.1080/03085694.2013.785082](https://doi.org/10.1080/03085694.2013.785082)

[3.3] Brotton, J. (2016). *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World*. Allen Lane. Published as *The Sultan and the Queen: The Untold Story of Elizabeth and Islam* in the US (Viking).

[3.4] Lowe, A., & Brotton, J. (2017). Re-visioning the World: Mapping the lithosphere. In *Aesthetics of Universal Knowledge* (pp. 31-51). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42595-5\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-42595-5_3)

[3.5] Brotton, J., & Millea, N. (2019). *Talking Maps*. Bodleian Library Publishing.

### Evidence of quality of the research

[EQR.3.2] Brotton, J. [PI] (2009-10). Mapping the World [[AH/H007644/1](#)]. AHRC. Research leave Scheme. GBP32,417.

Winner of Book of the Year in Austria (2015); a *New York Times* bestseller; translated into thirteen languages.

[EQR.3.3] Winner of the Historical Writer's Association prize for non-fiction (2017); shortlisted for the PEN Hessell-Tiltman Prize (2017); Waterstones and FT Book of the Year; serialised as BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week (April 2016); translated into Turkish and Chinese.

#### *Research with the Kuikuro*

Brotton, J. [Joint PI]. (2016). The Anthropology and History of Discovery [NG160049]. *British Academy*. Newton Mobility Grant Scheme Round 1. GBP9,998.

For work developed in relation to the Creativeworks Social Change through Creativity and Culture Brazil (SCTCC) project, phase II, on which Brotton was one of 6 co-investigators. It led Brotton to write and present a BBC World Service radio programme, 'Voices from the Amazon' (2017).

Brotton, J. [Co-I] (2013-2015). Cartography between Europe and the Islamic World, 1100-1600 [IN-2013-015]. *Leverhulme Trust*. International Network Grant. GBP44,567.

#### 4. Details of the impact

Brotton's research on mapping has allowed cultural heritage organisations, creative practitioners, and their audiences to address fundamental questions of what the practices and products of mapping embody and enable. Aligning new methods of heritage preservation with historical analyses and the imaging and access tools offered by digital technologies, Brotton's research has advanced public and professional understanding of maps and mapping in three key areas.

##### **Developing the conservation and exchange of culture through practice and interpretation of mapping**

Brotton's research on the consequences of digitality for mapping [3.1, 3.4] have underpinned the development of new digital technologies for the recreation, preservation, and reinterpretation of historic maps in collaborations with Factum Arte and Bodleian Libraries in the co-curation of the exhibition 'Talking Maps' [3.5] at the Weston Library (Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, June 2019–March 2020). Under Brotton's guidance, new scanning and printing techniques were applied to the Gough map, Hereford Cathedral's *mappa mundi* and Idrisi's *Entertainment*, creating new 3D maps, which were exhibited in the UK (Bodleian Libraries 2019–20) and internationally (Les Abattoirs Museum, Toulouse 2014; National Library, Madrid 2017). The Bodleian wrote that Brotton's research provided 'an opportunity for the Library to experiment further in the use of digital, or digital mediated interactive elements' and 'influenced the way the Library will approach future exhibition design' [5.6].

Brotton's research on digitality and heritage preservation [3.1, 3.2] has allowed new methods of cultural conservation to be developed in collaboration with local indigenous communities and artists in Brazil. In May 2017, he collaborated with Takumã, an artist from the Kuikuro people in the Mato Grosso region of Brazil, and Adam Lowe of Factum to produce 3D digital maps of Ipatse village, Takumã's home [5.8]. By enabling the community to visualise the landscape in new ways through the use of new mapping techniques, the project directly informed and supported their decision to re-site the village in a new, and environmentally sustainable location, preserving Kuikuro heritage into the future.

The technology and practice developed by Brotton and his collaborators has also contributed towards the cultural exchange between the Kuikuro and a British art-going public. As part of a Tate Modern Exchange event ('Producing Memory: Maps, Materials, Belonging,' May 2018), Brotton installed an interactive augmented reality display of Ipatse village and gave a talk on the work with Factum Arte and the Kuikuro [5.10]. The project has enhanced international awareness of indigenous rights and culture, and drawn indigenous environmental and aesthetic practices into dialogue with audiences and professionals at a leading European 'high' cultural institution (Tate Modern). The potential of this practice to promote cultural preservation and exchange was further demonstrated in a collaboration in 2018 with another Brazilian indigenous group, the Wauja community, who sought assistance in reconstructing and preserving the sacred cave site of Kamukuwaka, which had been vandalised. Brotton, Lowe, and their artist-collaborators mapped the cave, creating a record of the site in perpetuity. This was then displayed at the Factum Arte studio in Madrid (November 2019), as part of a project co-curated by Brotton that included workshops with indigenous artists and activists from Brazil to address the political and environmental consequences of the Bolsonaro regime [5.8].

Brotton's research has also furthered public and institutional understanding of cultural exchange as a historic process within the UK. His research on the cultural exchanges between Elizabethan England and the Muslim world directly contributed to the exhibition 'London's Theatre of the East' at the Arab British Centre and Dr Johnson's House (DJH; November 2019–January 2020). As a result of his book, *This Orient Isle* [3.3], Brotton was appointed as lead academic adviser for the exhibition, and the knowledges generated in his research shaped its curatorial practice and facilitated public engagement through associated events

and publications. The Arab British Centre writes [5.2]: 'Brotton's involvement in London's Theatre of the East has been instrumental to the project's success [...] His enthusiasm and knowledge has been invaluable.' The curator of Dr Johnson's House writes: 'the academic and historical context for the project is firmly rooted in Prof. Brotton's book *This Orient Isle* [...] it also inspired us to look at the concept of representation through the documented instances of 'contact' in very practical terms: political, commercial, and socio-economic' [5.5].

### **Facilitating creative and artistic practice and production**

Brotton's research on the interconnections and exchanges between Elizabethan England and Islam [3.3] has underpinned new theatrical and artistic production, enabling directors and artists to develop new artistic perspectives, produce new creative outputs, and reach new audiences.

In 2017, Brotton provided consultation and programme notes for a ground-breaking production of *Othello*: the first major professional production in the UK that explored Othello's heritage and identity as a Muslim. It was directed by English Touring Theatre's artistic director Richard Twyman in collaboration with 'Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory' (Bristol). Twyman notes the fundamental influence of Brotton's work: 'Brotton's *This Orient Isle* had a profound impact on me and my thinking around the production. Without Jerry's scholarship and subsequent support, I would not have had the knowledge or freedom to approach the play in this way [...] Jerry's revolutionary book [...] provided this thread and gave all of us involved in the production the confidence to create an *Othello* that has gone on to change the performance history of the play in the UK' [5.1].

In connection with London's Theatre of the East, Brotton presented his work to Arab-British artists chosen to lead exhibitions. In particular, Brotton's research findings in this area have influenced a commissioned artwork by Nour Hage, award-winning Lebanese fashion designer. Her piece, *Sultana Isabel* (the name comes from Ottoman sources discussed by Brotton in [3.3]) was developed as an installation for London's Theatre of the East and drew inspiration from Brotton's work on the relation between Elizabethan England and the Muslim world. The piece models Elizabeth I's neck ruffs and references her personal connection with the Moroccan Kingdom, which helped her access the coveted Silk Road, bringing its luxuries into England for the first time. Hage developed new textile skills in dyeing and starching to create the ruff, which was coloured with natural dyes often associated with the Silk Road, such as turmeric and indigo [5.4]. A reviewer for the British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies' *Criticks* webpages noted that the artwork 'encapsulates Elizabethan commercial interests while also hinting at the dramatic engagement with the Arab world by Shakespeare and Marlowe and later by Johnson himself' [5.9], foregrounding precisely the influence of Brotton's work on maps and early modern drama.

### **Increasing cultural participation and enhancing public understanding of mapping**

Public engagement is embedded in Brotton's approach to all his work, as evidenced in the audiences [5.7] for his publications and his participation in talks and events aimed at general publics. In co-curating the exhibition 'Talking Maps' at the Weston Library (Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, June 2019-March 2020), Brotton has made a significant contribution to increasing cultural participation in and enhancing public understanding of mapping. Almost 98,000 people visited the exhibition, and Brotton led guided lunchtime tours with over 1,000 attending [5.7]. Bodleian Libraries noted that the exhibition drew much larger audiences than previous, similar events at the Weston Library and concurrent events with similar themes. Of 2,400 public respondents, 42% said they knew little or nothing about maps prior to viewing the exhibition and 66% agreed that after seeing the show 'they have a new understanding of maps.' Asked 'how has your idea of a map changed,' visitors' answers indicated their understanding of maps had been enhanced, reporting a new 'perspective on maps as story-telling devices,' a new understanding of 'maps as objects with different purposes and

reflections of different cosmological perspectives', and that the exhibition had 'revolutionized my way of thinking' [5.7].

In connection with London's Theatre of the East, Brotton organised a performance by Queen Mary students of the first public ticketed staged reading in 270 years of *Irene*, Samuel Johnson's Ottoman-themed play (November 2019). The related exhibition itself drew over 3,500 attendees. The results of a survey of 66 visitors indicate increased cultural participation with 89% not having visited Doctor Johnson's House before and 73% previously unaware of the Arab British Centre. Feedback received from visitors demonstrates enhanced public understanding and a greater sense of inclusion: 'This exhibition really spoke to me as someone of Arab Heritage living in London [...] I saw myself reflected in the contents and art. Unfortunately, this kind of experience is incredibly rare' [5.3].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [5.1] [Testimonial] Artistic Director, English Touring Theatre [Corroborator 1]
- [5.2] [Testimonial] Events and Communications Officer, The Arab British Centre [Corroborator 2]
- [5.3] [Testimonial] Arab British Centre statement and audience figures monitoring evaluation
- [5.4] [Testimonial] Nour Hage
- [5.5] [Testimonial] Curator, Dr Johnson's House [Corroborator 3]
- [5.6] [Testimonial] Head of Public Engagement, Bodleian Library [Corroborator 4]
- [5.7] [Data] Audience monitoring figures from Bodleian
- [5.8] [Testimonial] Director, Factum Arte [Corroborator 5]
- [5.9] [Review] British Eighteenth Society for Century Studies *Criticks* website <https://www.bsecs.org.uk/criticks-reviews/londons-theatre-of-the-east-dr-johnsons-house/>
- [5.10] [Review] Tate Exchange Evaluation