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Distribution of Oceans and Continents

CONTINENTAL DRIFT:-

1. By Alfred Wegener—a German meteorologist (अंतरिक्षविज्ञानशास्त्री) 1912. This was regarding the distribution of the oceans and the continents.
2. According to Wegener, **all the continents** formed a **single continental mass** and **mega ocean** surrounded the same.
3. The super continent was named **PANGAEA**, which meant **all earth**.
4. The mega-ocean was called **PANTHALASSA**, meaning **all water**.
5. He argued that, around **200 million years ago**, the super continent, Pangaea, began to split.



6. Pangaea first broke into **two large continental masses** as **Laurasia** and **Gondwanaland** forming the northern and southern components respectively.

7. Subsequently, **Laurasia** and **Gondwanaland** continued to break into various smaller continents that exist today.

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LAURASIA

Equator

Equator

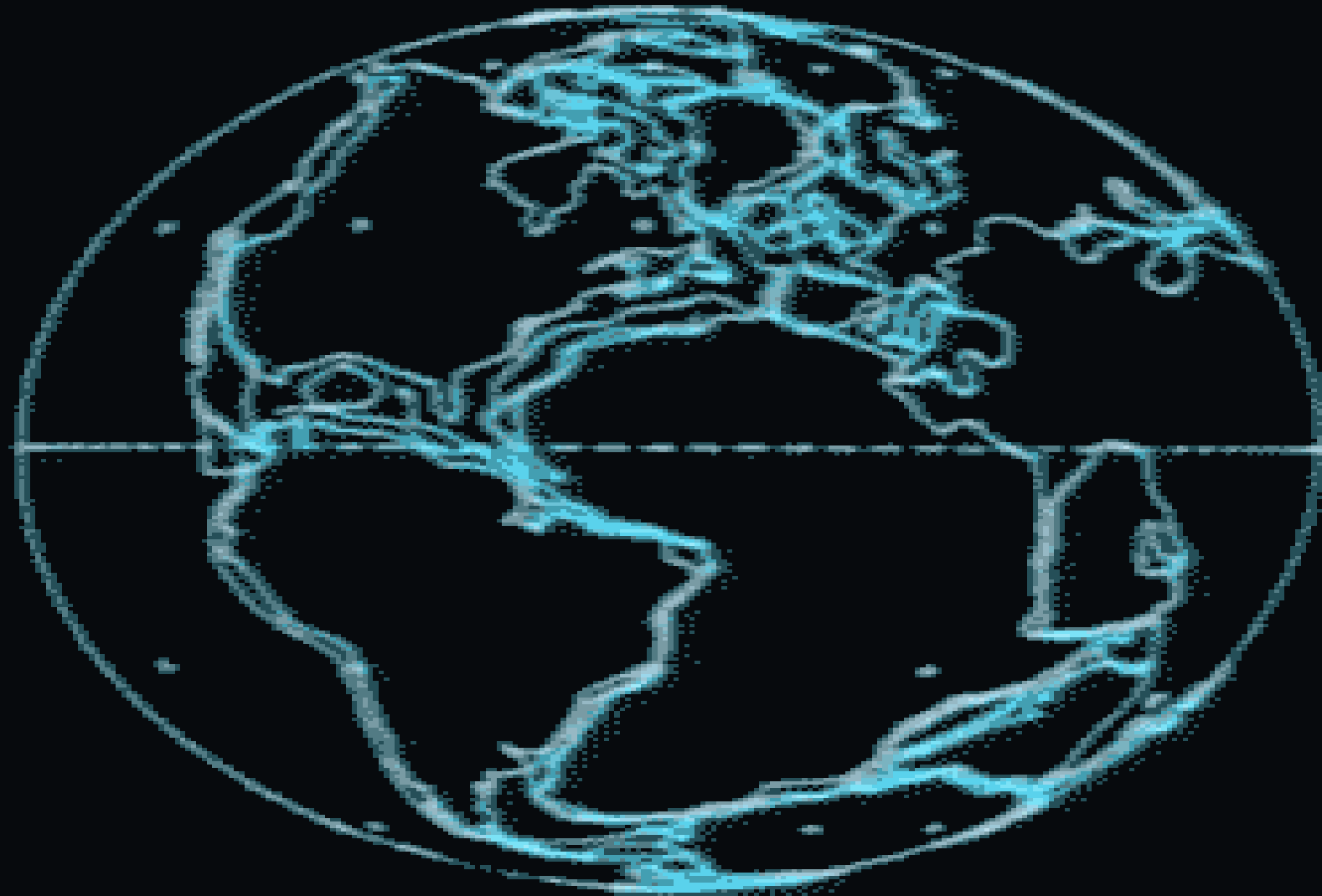
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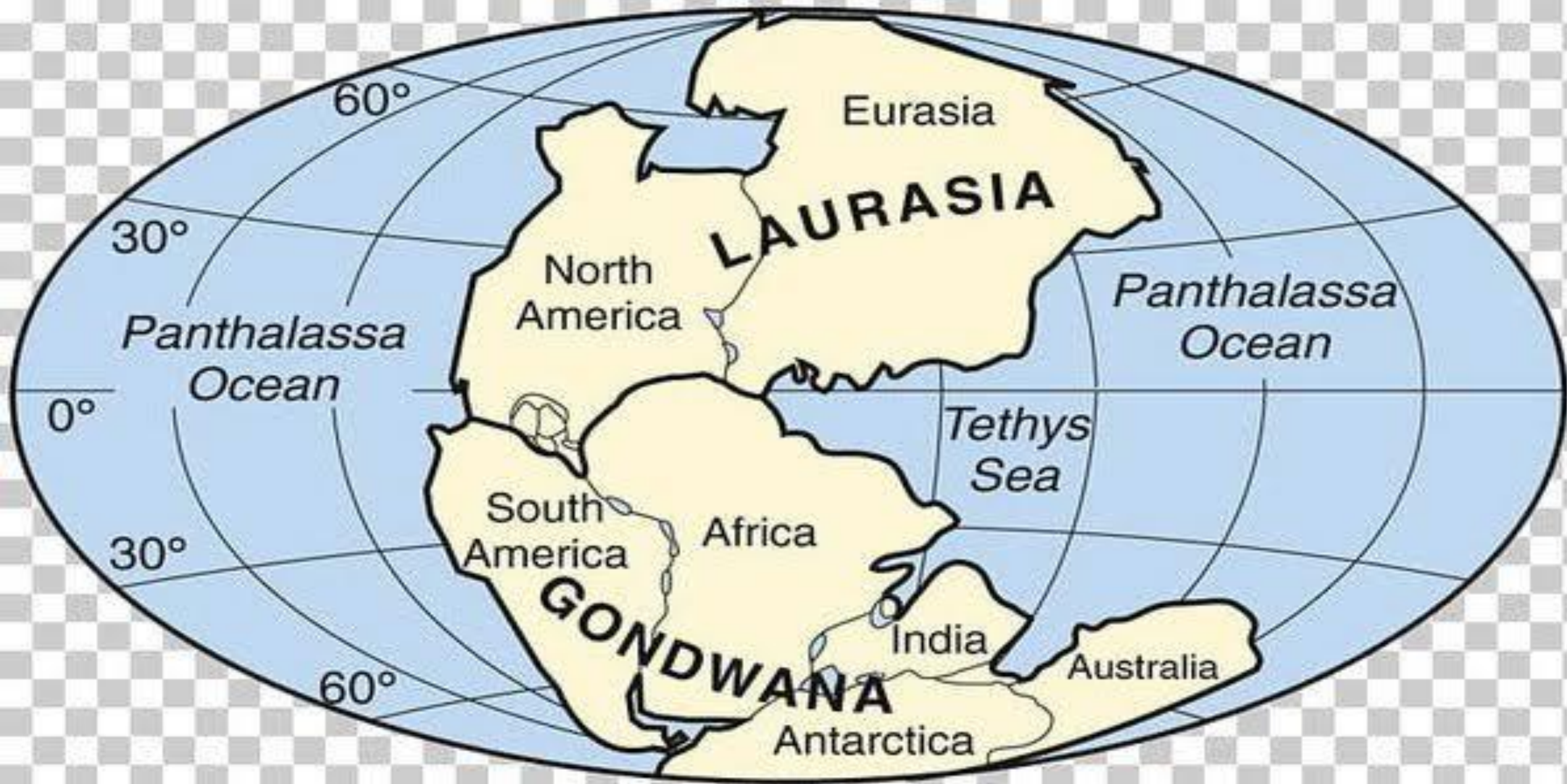
TRIASSIC

200

GONDWANA

million years ago

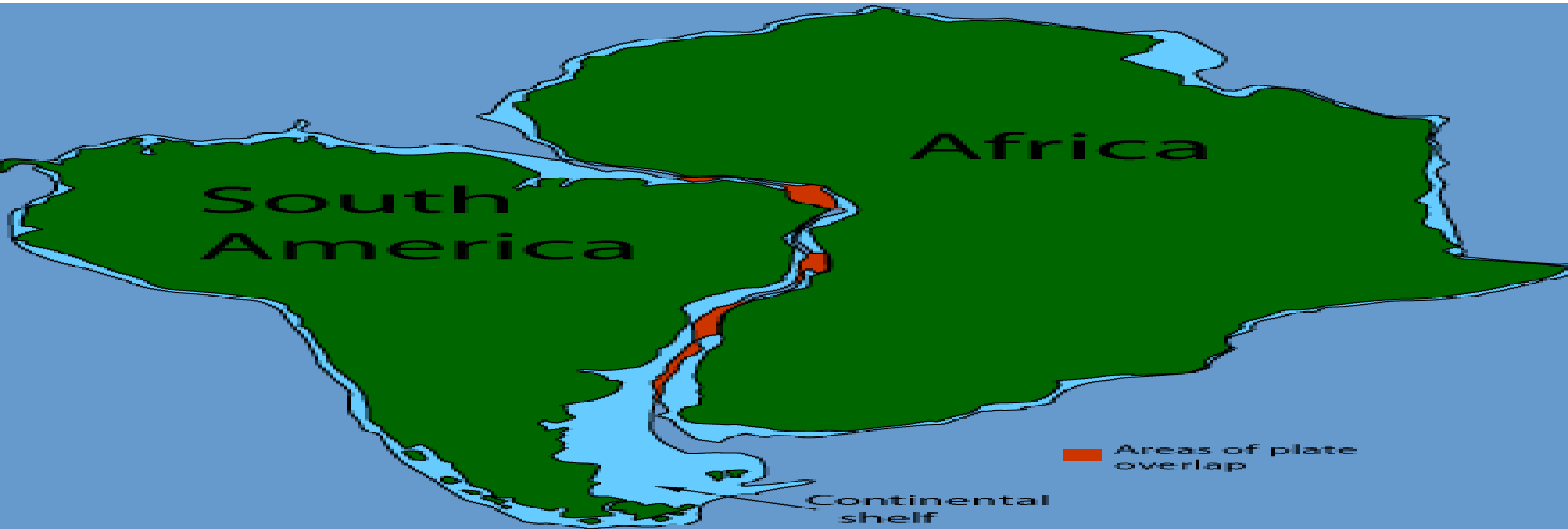


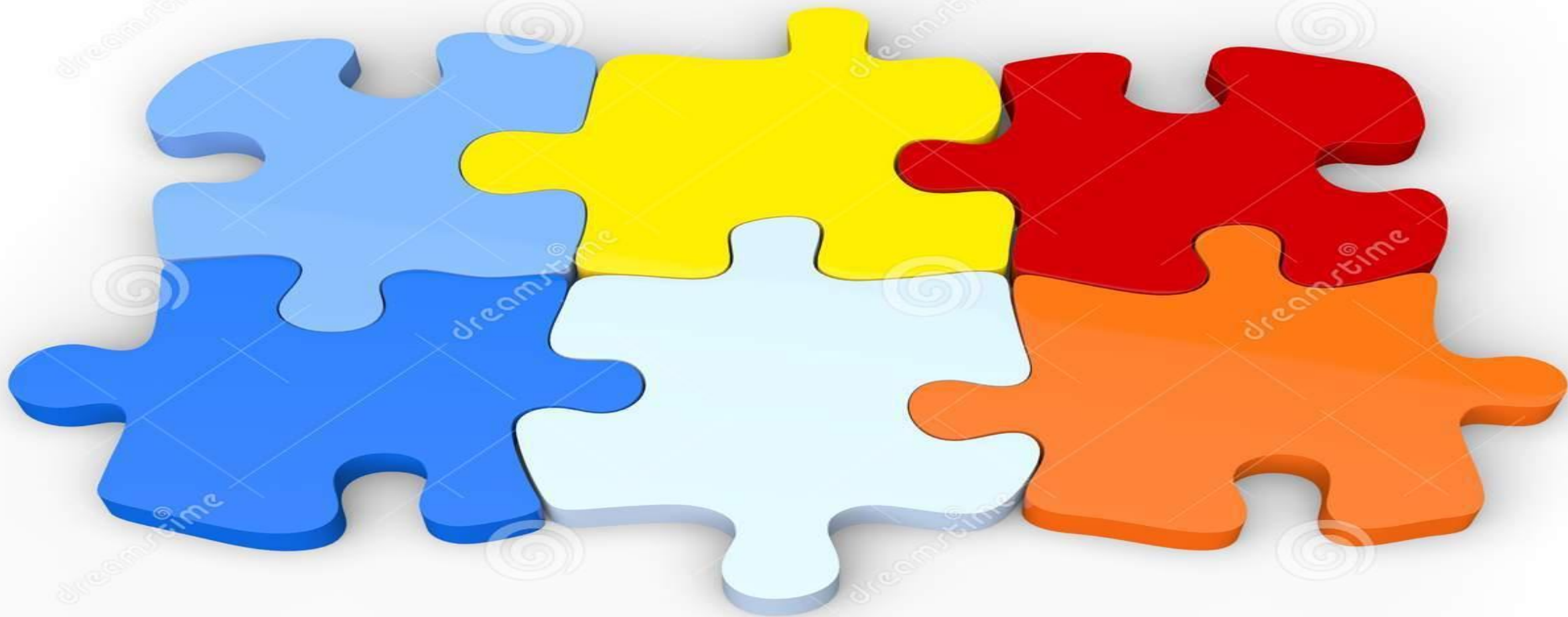


Evidence in Support of the Continental Drift

• The Matching of Continents (Jig-Saw-Fit)

1. The shorelines of Africa and South America facing each other have a remarkable and unmistakable match.





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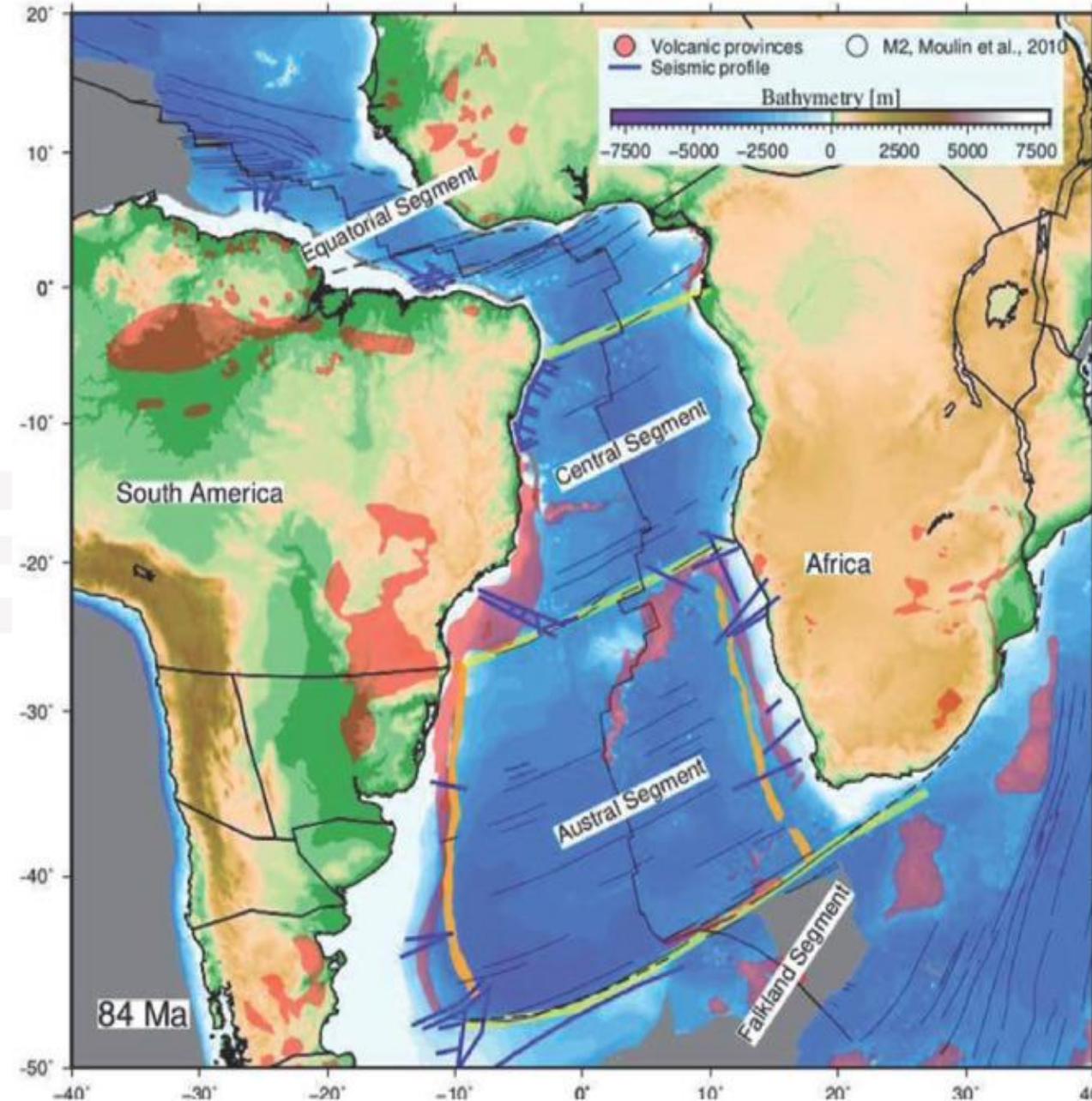


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2. It may be noted that a map produced using a computer programme to find the best fit of the Atlantic margin was presented by Bullard in 1964.

3. It proved to be quite perfect. The match was tried at 1,000- fathom(depth of water) line instead of the present shoreline.



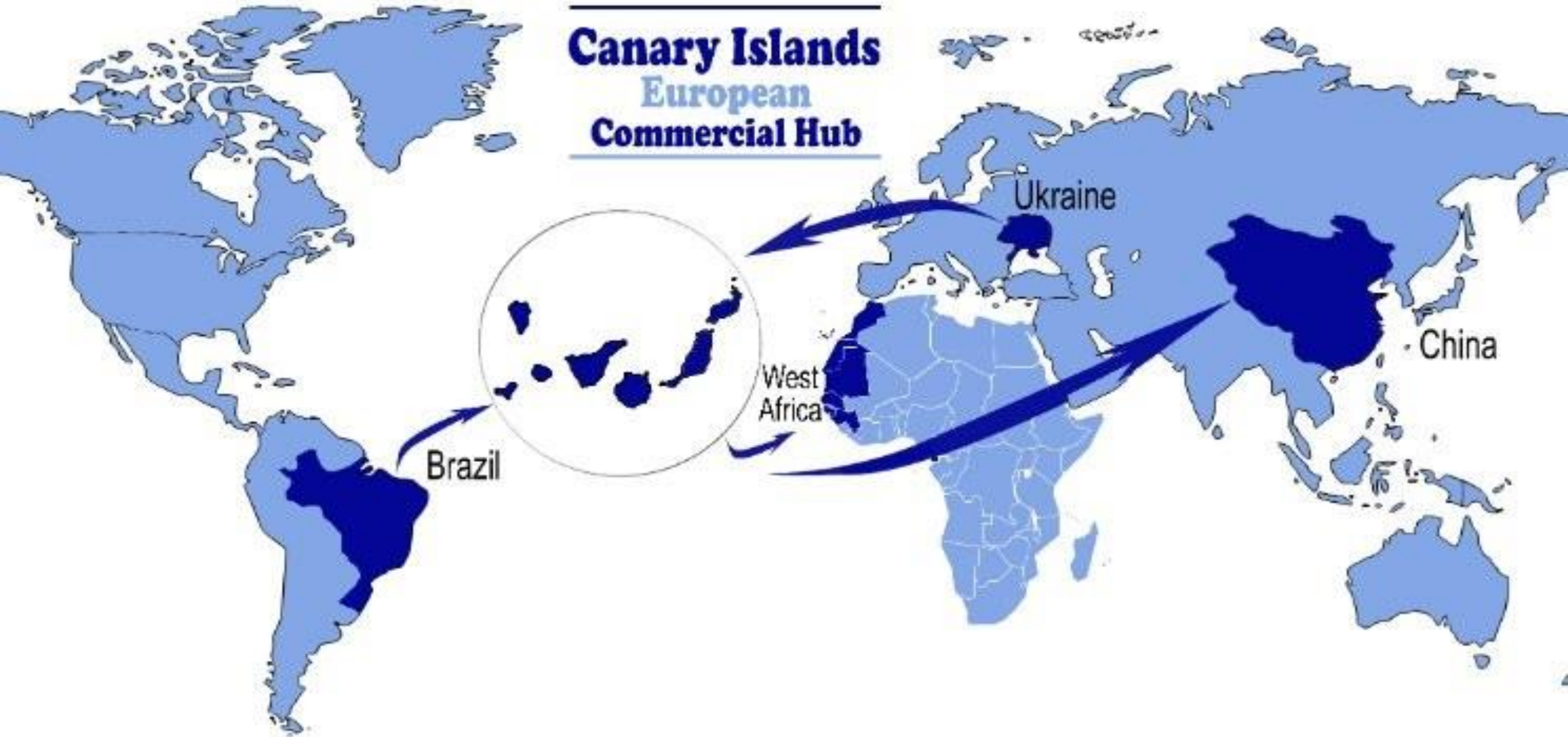
• Rocks of Same Age Across the Oceans

1. The radiometric dating methods developed in the recent period have facilitated correlating the rock formation from different continents across the vast ocean.

2. The belt of ancient rocks of 2,000 million years from Brazil coast matches with those from western Africa.

3. The earliest marine deposits (समुद्री जमा) along the coastline of South America and Africa are of the Jurassic age. This suggests that the ocean did not exist prior to that time.





• Tillite

1. It is the **sedimentary rock** (Sedimentary rocks are formed from deposits of pre-existing rocks or pieces of once-living organism that accumulate on the Earth's surface) formed out of deposits of glaciers.

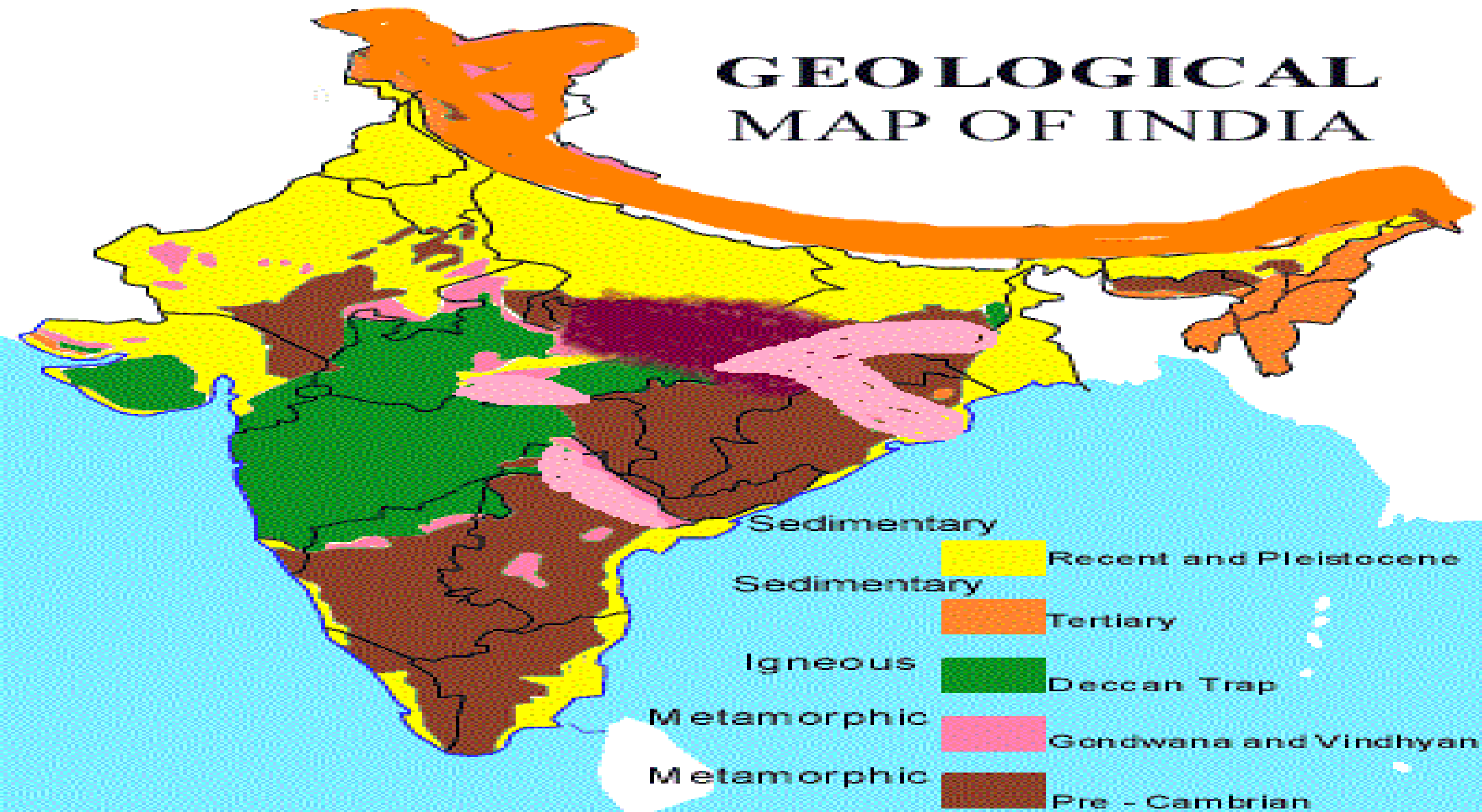
2. The **Gondawana system of sediments from India** is known to have its counterparts in six different landmasses of the **Southern Hemisphere**.

3. At the base the system has thick tillite indicating extensive and **prolonged glaciation**.





GEOLOGICAL MAP OF INDIA



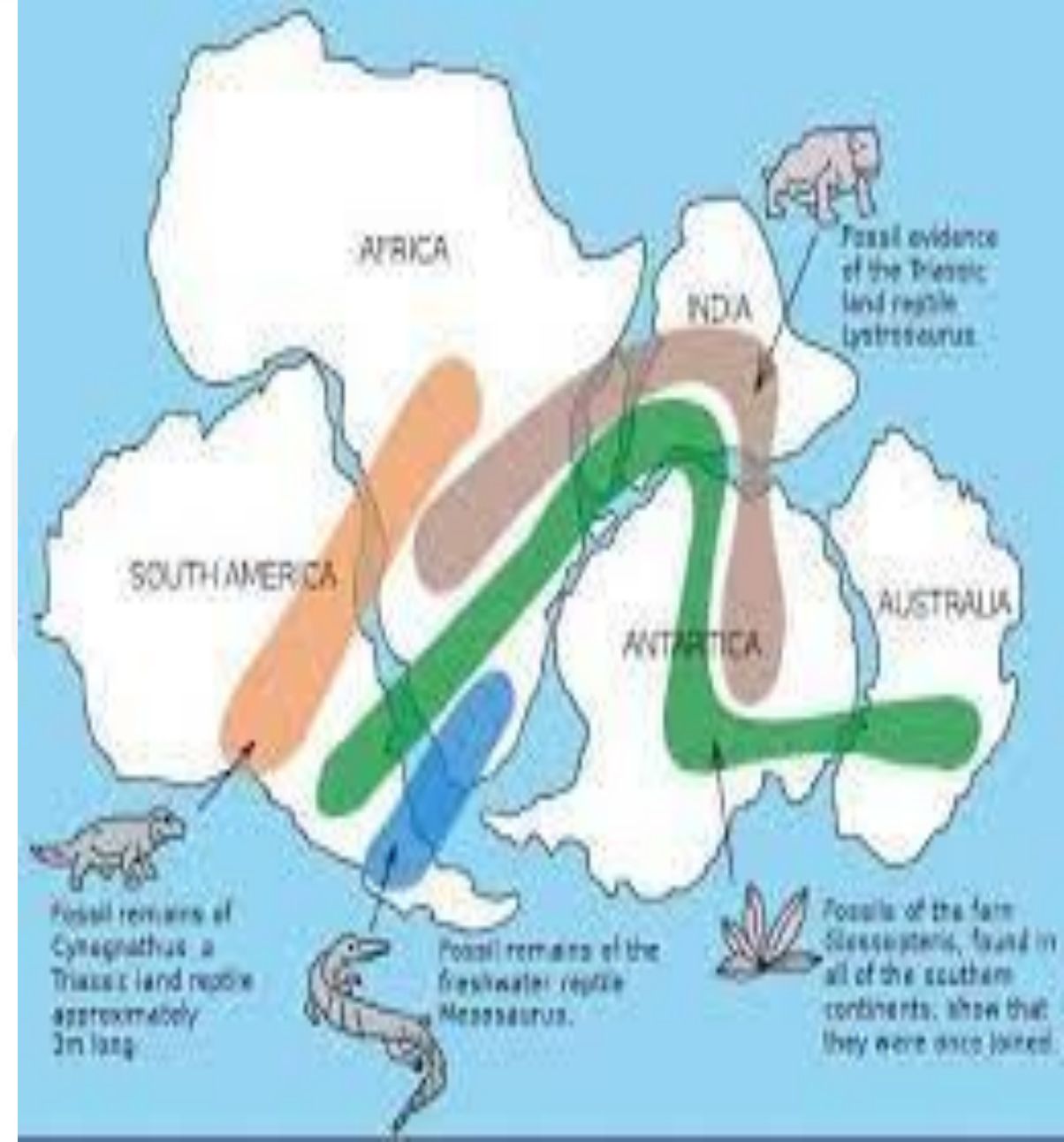
Češka Mapa světa



4. Counter parts of this succession are found in **Africa, Falkland Island, Madagascar, Antarctica and Australia** besides India.

5. Overall resemblance of the Gondawana type sediments clearly demonstrates that these landmasses had remarkably similar histories.

6. The glacial tillite provides **unambiguous evidence of palaeoclimates** and also of drifting of continents.



• Placer Deposits

1. The occurrence of rich placer deposits of gold in the **Ghana coast** and the absolute absence of **source rock** in the region is an amazing fact.

2. The **gold bearing veins are in Brazil** and it is obvious that the gold deposits of the Ghana are derived from the Brazil plateau when the two continents lay side by side.



• Distribution of Fossils

1. When **identical species** of plants and animals **adapted** to living on land or in fresh water are found on either side of the **marine barriers**, a problem arises regarding accounting for such distribution.

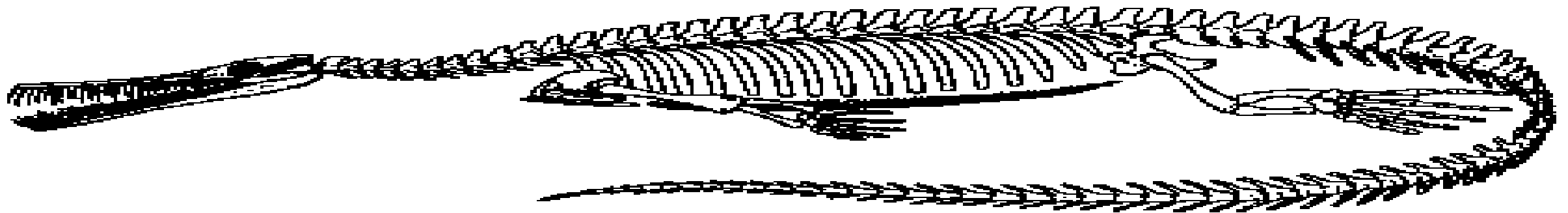
2. The observations that **Lemurs** occur in **India, Madagascar and Africa** led some to consider a contiguous landmass “**Lemuria**” linking these three landmasses.



3. Mesosaurus was a small reptile adapted to shallow brackish water.

4. The skeletons of these are found only in **two localities** : the **Southern Cape province of South Africa** and **Traver formations of Brazil**.

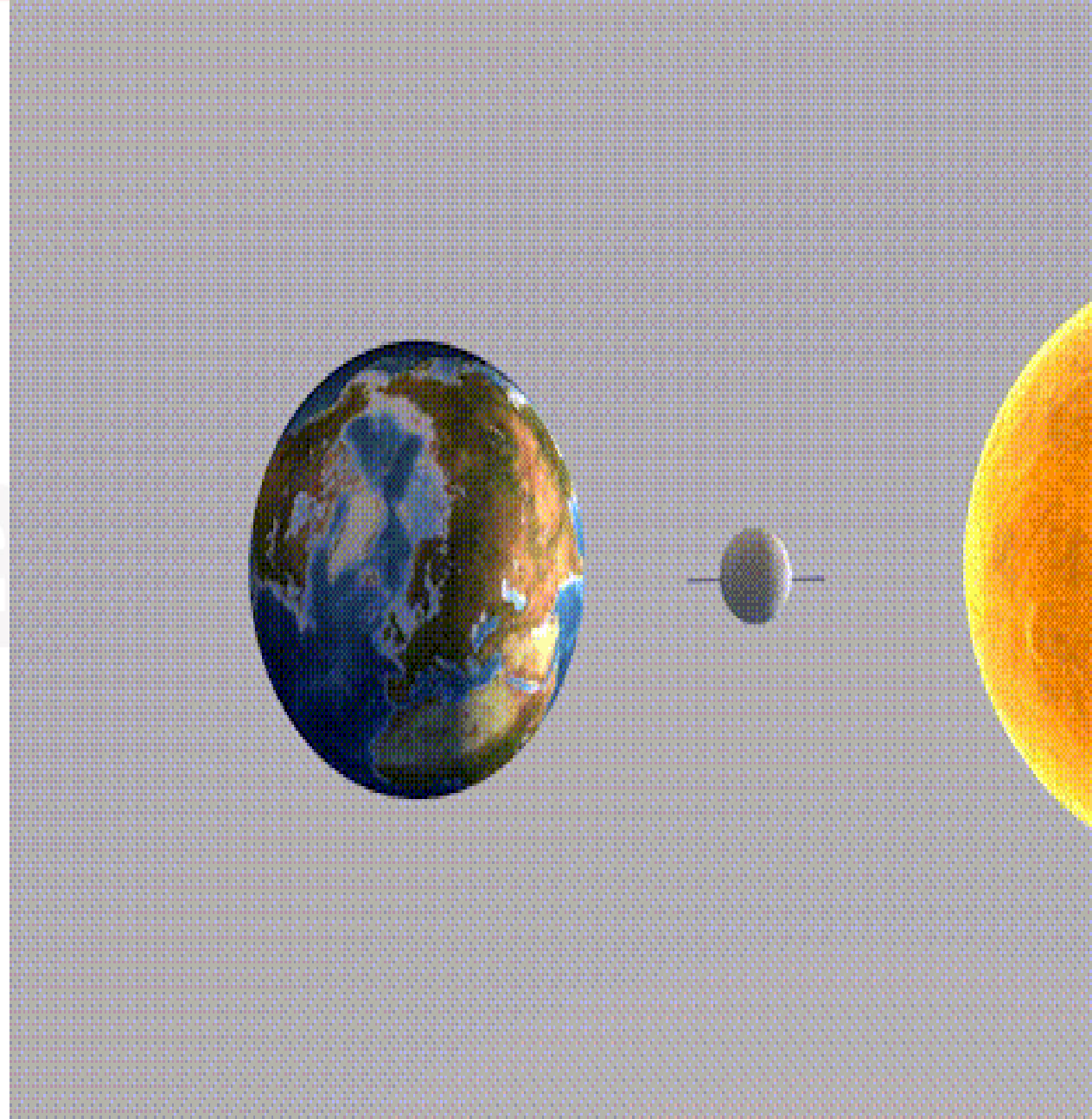
5. The two localities presently are 4,800 km apart with an ocean in between them.





Force for Drifting

1. Wegener suggested that the movement responsible for the drifting of the continents was caused by **pole-fleeing force and tidal force**.
2. The polar-fleeing force relates to the **rotation of the earth**.
3. The earth is **not a perfect sphere**; it has a **bulge at the equator**.



4. This bulge is due to the rotation of the earth.

5. The second force that was suggested by Wegener—the tidal force—is due to the attraction of the moon and the sun that develops tides in oceanic waters.

6. Wegener believed that these forces would become effective when applied over many million years.

7. However, most of scholars considered these forces to be totally inadequate.

