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978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

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## Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human

Giants, cannibals and other monsters were a regular feature of Renaissance illustrated maps, inhabiting the Americas alongside other indigenous peoples. In a new approach to views of distant peoples, Surekha Davies analyses this archive alongside prints, costume books and geographical writing. Using sources from Iberia, France, the German lands, the Low Countries, Italy and England, Davies argues that mapmakers and viewers saw these maps as careful syntheses that enabled viewers to compare different peoples. In an age when scholars, missionaries, native peoples and colonial officials debated whether New World inhabitants could – or should – be converted or enslaved, maps were uniquely suited for assessing the impact of environment on bodies and temperaments. Through innovative interdisciplinary methods connecting the European Renaissance to the Atlantic world, Davies uses new sources and questions to explore science as a visual pursuit, revealing how debates about the relationship between humans and monstrous peoples challenged colonial expansion.

SUREKHA DAVIES is a cultural historian and historian of science at Western Connecticut State University. Her interests include exploration, observational sciences, monstrosity and the history of mentalities c.1400–1800.

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# Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human

New Worlds, Maps and Monsters

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SUREKHA DAVIES

Western Connecticut State University



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Frontmatter  
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Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*To Clare and Alex*

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978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Contents

*List of figures* [page viii]

*Acknowledgements* [xiv]

*Preface and note on the text* [xix]

*List of abbreviations* [xx]

Introduction: Renaissance maps and the concept of  
the human [1]

- 1 Climate, culture or kinship? Explaining human diversity  
c.1500 [23]
- 2 Atlantic empires, map workshops and Renaissance geographical  
culture [47]
- 3 Spit-roasts, barbecues and the invention of the Brazilian  
cannibal [65]
- 4 Trade, empires and propaganda: Brazilians on French maps in the  
age of François I and Henri II [109]
- 5 Monstrous ontology and environmental thinking: Patagonia's  
giants [148]
- 6 The epistemology of wonder: Amazons, headless men and  
mapping Guiana [183]
- 7 Civility, idolatry and cities in Mexico and Peru [217]
- 8 New sources, new genres and America's place in the world,  
1590–1645 [257]

Epilogue [297]

*Bibliography* [302]

*Index* [349]

## Figures

- 1.1 *Sexta figura. Hec figura servit nono capitulo pro divisione terre per climata. [right] Septima figura. Hec figura servit xiiii. capitulo pluribus aliis pro divisione terre in tres partes . . .* in Pierre d'Ailly, [Ymago Mundi], ([Louvain?], [1483?]). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, A483 A293i / 1-SIZE. [page 28]
- 1.2 Psalter map, c.1265. MS Add. 28681, f. 9r. © British Library Board. [36]
- 3.1 Christopher Columbus, *De insulis inventis* (Basle, 1493), title page, detail. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Taylor 32. [75]
- 3.2 *Dise figur anzaigt uns das volck und insel die gefunden ist* ([Augsburg?], [c.1503]), woodcut, attributed to Johann Froschauer. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Einbl. V,2. [80]
- 3.3 Amerigo Vespucci, *Diss büchlin sagt . . .* (Strasbourg, 1509), sig. B.i.v. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, 18657. [82]
- 3.4 Amerigo Vespucci, *Diss büchlin sagt . . .* (Strasbourg, 1509), sig. E.iiii.v. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, 18657. [82]
- 3.5 Kunstmann II map, c.1506, detail from Brazil. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod. icon. 133. [85]
- 3.6 Johannes Ruysch, *Universalior cogniti orbis tabula ex recentibus confecta observationi* (Rome, 1507). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, JCB Z P975 1507 / 2-SIZE (copy 1). [87]
- 3.7 Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta Marina* ([Strasbourg?], 1516). Image courtesy of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation and the Library of Congress. [89]
- 3.8 Martin Waldseemüller, *Carta Marina* ([Strasbourg?], 1516), detail from Brazil. Image courtesy of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation and the Library of Congress. [89]
- 3.9 Diogo Homem, 'Queen Mary Atlas', 1558, detail from Brazil. © British Library Board, MS Add. 5415, f.23v. [93]



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

- 3.10 Sebastian Münster, *Typus cosmographicus universalis* in Johann Huttich, ed., *Geographica universalis* (Basle, 1532). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 1986 +106. [102]
- 4.1 Pierre Desceliers, 'Mappemonde', 1550. © British Library Board, Add. MS. 24065. [114]
- 4.2 Brazilian tableau at the entry of Henri II into Rouen, 1550 in *C'est la déduction du sumptueux ordre . . .* (Rouen, 1551), sig. [K.ii.v-iii<sup>r</sup>], engraving. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.51.272. [118]
- 4.3 Miller Atlas, 1519, detail from Brazil. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, Rés. Ge DD 683. [123]
- 4.4 Rotz Atlas, 1542, ff. 27<sup>v</sup>–28<sup>r</sup>, detail from South America. © British Library Board, Royal MS 20.E.IX. [126]
- 4.5 Vallard Atlas, 1547, map 12, detail from eastern South America. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, HM 29. [130]
- 4.6 François Deserps, *Receuil de la diuersité des habits* (Paris, 1562), unpaginated, image of a Brazilian woman. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.64.734. [131]
- 4.7 François Deserps, *Receuil de la diuersité des habits* (Paris, 1562), unpaginated, image of a Brazilian man. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.64.734. [132]
- 4.8 Vallard Atlas, 1547, map 2, Terra Java, detail of procession. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, HM 29. [140]
- 4.9 Balthasar Springer, *Die Merfart und erfahrung nüwer schiffung* (s.l., 1509), woodcut by Wolf Traut after Hans Burgkmair, of a procession of the king of Cochin. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Rar. 470. [142]
- 4.10 Pierre Desceliers, 'Mappemonde', c.1546, detail from Asia. Copyright of the University of Manchester, French MS 1\*. [143]
- 4.11 Vallard Atlas, 1547, map 10, detail of Tenochtitlán. The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, HM 29. [145]
- 5.1 Martin Schongauer, *Shield with Stag Held by Wild Man* (Germany, c.1480–90), engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1928, www.metmuseum.org, 28.26.7. [152]
- 5.2 Sebastian Cabot, world map (Nuremberg, 1544), detail of giant. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, Rés GE AA 582. [165]

- 5.3 Sancho Gutiérrez, world map, 1551, detail of giant. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Kartensammlung, K I 99.416. [166]
- 5.4 Pierre Desceliers, 'Mappemonde', 1550, detail of Patagonian giants. © British Library Board, Add. MS. 24065. [167]
- 5.5 Gerard de Jode, map of America (Antwerp, 1576), detail. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G5200 1569 .M2 Vault. [168]
- 5.6 Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia* (Bologna, 1642), 35, detail. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, M.13.43. [169]
- 5.7 Petrus Plancius, map of southern South America (Amsterdam, c.1592–4), detail. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Cabinet Gg59 PIP. [174]
- 6.1 Jodocus Hondius the Elder, *Nieuwe caerte van het wonderbaer ende goudrijcke landt Guiana* (Amsterdam, c.1598). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, GE D 1437; gallicalabs.bnf.fr, IFN-8492438. [199]
- 6.2 Jodocus Hondius the Elder, *Nieuwe caerte van het wonderbaer ende goudrijcke landt Guiana* (Amsterdam, c.1598), detail. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, GE D 1437; gallicalabs.bnf.fr, IFN-8492438. [200]
- 6.3 Jodocus Hondius the Elder, map of North America (Amsterdam, c.1598), detail. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, NS3 M36 .1 .2. [204]
- 6.4 Cornelis Claesz, map of the Americas (Amsterdam, c.1602). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, gallicalabs.bnf.fr, Rés GE B 1115 [Kl 560]. [205]
- 6.5 Cornelis Claesz, map of the Americas (Amsterdam, c.1602), detail of upper frieze. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, gallicalabs.bnf.fr, Rés GE B 1115 [Kl 560]. [206]
- 6.6 Cornelis Claesz, map of the Americas (Amsterdam, c.1602), detail of lower frieze. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, gallicalabs.bnf.fr, Rés GE B 1115 [Kl 560]. [206]
- 6.7 Pieter van den Keere, *Nova orbis terrarum geographica ac hydrographica tabula* (Amsterdam, 1619), detail of upper frieze. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, Rés GE C 4931; gallicalabs.bnf.fr, IFN-720026. [208]

- 6.8 Sir Walter Raleigh, *Kurtze Wunderbare Beschreibung deß goldreichen Königreichs Guianae in America . . .* (Nuremberg, 1599), title-page. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, J Hulsius pt. 5 1599 1. [211]
- 7.1 Map of Tenochtitlán, in Hernán Cortés, *Praeclara de Nova Maris oceani Hyspania narratio* (Nuremberg, 1524), detail. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Taylor 58. [229]
- 7.2 Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Terzo volume delle nauigationi et viaggi* (Venice, 1565), 411–2, Giacomo Gastaldi's view of Cuzco. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 2001 +204 3. [233]
- 7.3 Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Terzo volume delle nauigationi et viaggi* (Venice, 1565), 411–2, Giacomo Gastaldi's view of Cuzco, detail of Atahualpa's litter. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 2001 +204 3. [237]
- 7.4 Francisco de Xérez, *Verdadera relación de la conquista del Peru . . .* (Seville, 1534), title-page, detail. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, B534 X61 /1-SIZE. [238]
- 7.5 Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, 3 vols. (1572–1617), I, f. 58v–59r., view of Cuzco; view of Tenochtitlán. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, J575 B825c / 2-SIZE. [240]
- 7.6 Girolamo Benzoni and Nicolas Challeux, *Americae pars sexta, sive historiae ab Hieronymo Benzono Mediolanense scriptae, sectio tertia . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1596), title-page. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, E159 +B79 6–9. [242]
- 7.7 Girolamo Benzoni and Nicolas Challeux, *Americae pars sexta, sive historiae ab Hieronymo Benzono Mediolanense scriptae, sectio tertia . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1596), view of Cuzco. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 192 4–6. [243]
- 7.8 Girolamo Benzoni and Nicolas Challeux, *Americae pars sexta, sive historiae ab Hieronymo Benzono Mediolanense scriptae, sectio tertia . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1596), detail of metal-working, sig. G.4.r. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, G159 .B7 pt. 6 F1442. [244]
- 7.9 Clement de Jonghe, *Hydrographica planeque nova Indiae occidentalis . . .* (Amsterdam, c.1665 [re-issue of map by Cornelis

- Claesz]), detail from northern South America. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, Ge DD 2987 [9637]; gallicalabs.bnf.fr, IFN-55005163. [247]
- 7.10 Girolamo Benzoni and Nicolas Challeux, *Americae pars sexta, sive historiae ab Hieronymo Benzono Mediolanense scriptae, sectio tertia . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1596), detail of procession of Atahualpa, sig. B.3.r. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, G159 .B7 pt. 6 F1442. [248]
- 8.1 François Deserps, *Receuil de la diuersité des habits* (Paris, 1562), unpaginated, a Picardy woman. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.64.734. [261]
- 8.2 François Deserps, *Receuil de la diuersité des habits* (Paris, 1562), unpaginated, a monkey. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.64.734. [262]
- 8.3 François Deserps, *Receuil de la diuersité des habits* (Paris, 1562), unpaginated, a cyclopes. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 515.64.734. [263]
- 8.4 Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp, 1570), title-page. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G1006 .T5 1570b. [265]
- 8.5 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1590), title-page. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Taylor 194. [271]
- 8.6 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1590), facing p. 51, image of a Pict. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 12786. [272]
- 8.7 Cornelis de Jode, *Americae pars borealis* (Antwerp, 1593), detail. From Phillips Academy, Andover MA, The Sidney R. Knafel Map Collection. [275]
- 8.8 William Hole, 'Virginia' map in John Smith, *A Map of Virginia, with a Description of the Covntrey, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion* (Oxford, 1612). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Vanderbilt +145. [278]
- 8.9 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1590), plate III, detail. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, J590 B915v GV-E.1 [F] / 2-SIZE. [280]
- 8.10 Willem Blaeu, world map, 1605 [1624 edition by Jodocus Hondius the Younger], detail of inhabitants of Greenland and Florida.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*List of figures*

xiii

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, GE DD 5161; gallica.bnf.fr, IFN-55005078. [285]

- 8.11 Willem Blaeu, world map, 1605 [1624 edition by Jodocus Hondius the Younger], detail of personifications of America. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, GE DD 5161; gallica.bnf.fr, IFN-55005078. [287]
- 8.12 Pieter van den Keere, *Nova orbis terrarum geographica ac hydrographica tabula* (Amsterdam, 1619), detail of personifications of the parts of the world. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans, Rés GE C 4931; gallica.bnf.fr, IFN-720026. [288]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

xvii

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978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

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978-1-107-03667-3 - Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds,  
Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Preface and note on the text

I have normalized *i* and *j* and *u* and *v* in Latin quotations. I have occasionally modified punctuation and capitalization in Latin and other languages for ease of reading. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. In all languages, contractions have been expanded.

What I mean by ‘ethnography’ in this book is descriptive writing or picturing of peoples and cultures. By ‘comparative ethnology’ I mean, loosely, analytical and comparative reflection on human diversity and its causes. There is clearly an overlap between these two terms; neither is meant to imply any particular methodological or theoretical standpoint, but rather to indicate the description and analysis of the world’s peoples via text, image or diagram.

What I refer to science in this volume, I do so in the Renaissance sense of *scientia*, or knowledge, particularly about the natural world, of which human civilization was a part. Renaissance science encompassed a broader range of topics, disciplines and practitioners than are commonly associated with modern science.

‘America’ refers to the combined landmasses of North and South America. The terms ‘Virginia’, ‘Florida’, ‘Peru’, ‘Guiana’, ‘Brazil’ and ‘Patagonia’ are used to designate general regions identified and named on maps and in texts during the period under study. Since these maps did not draw boundaries between areas, their dimensions were not precisely determined. These places are not intended to be taken as co-extensive with the eponymous modern regions. ‘Amerindians’ refers to peoples of either North or South America.

## Abbreviations

- AEM*: Hans Wolff, ed., *America: Early Maps of the New World*, trans. Hugo Beyer et al. (Munich: Prestel, 1992).
- Americae Pars II*: René de Laudonnière, Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, et al., *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae provincia Gallis acciderunt . . . Quae est secunda pars Americae. . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1591).
- Americae Pars III*: Hans Staden, Jean de Léry and Nicolas Barré, *Americae tertia pars memorabile provinciae Brasiliae historiam . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1592).
- Americae Pars IV*: Girolamo Benzoni, *Americae pars quarta. Sive, insignis et admiranda historia de reperta primum Occidentali India a Christophoro Columbo anno MCCCCXCII . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1594).
- Americae Pars V*: Girolamo Benzoni, *Americae pars quinta. Nobilis et admiratione plena Hieronymi Benzoni Mediolanensis, secundae sectionis Historia. . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1595).
- Americae Pars VI*: Girolamo Benzoni and Nicolas Challeux, *Americae pars sexta, sive historiae ab Hieronymo Benzono Mediolanense scriptae, sectio tertia . . .*, ed. Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1596).
- Americae Pars IX*: José de Acosta, Barent Jansz and Olivier van Noort, *Americae nona et postrema pars. Qua de ratione elementorum: de Novi Orbis natura. . .copiose pertractatur . . .*, [ed. widow and sons of Theodor de Bry] (Frankfurt am Main, 1602).
- Americae Pars XII*: Antonio de Herrera, Pedro Ordóñez de Cevallos [and Petrus Bertius], *Novi orbis pars duodecima*.

- Sive descriptio Indiae Occidentalis . . .*, ed. Johannes Theodor de Bry (Frankfurt am Main, 1624).
- Americae Pars XIII:* John Smith et al., *Decima tertia pars historiae Americanae*. . ., ed. Matthias Merian (Frankfurt am Main, 1634).
- ARC-MM:* Asa Simon Mittman with Peter J. Dendle, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).
- BA:* Joseph Sabin, *Bibliotheca Americana: A Dictionary of Books Relating to America*, 19 vols. (New York: Joseph Sabin, 1868–1936).
- BAV:* Henry Harrisse and Carlos Sanz, *Bibliotheca Americana vetustissima: A Description of Works Relating to America, Published Between the Years 1492 and 1551* (New York: G. P. Philes, 1866).
- BL-Mss:* British Library, Manuscript Collections.
- BLCH:* Juan Friede and Benjamin Keen, eds., *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and His Work* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971).
- BNF-Cartes:* Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Cartes et plans.
- BNF-Mss:* Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits.
- CCB:* George Watson Cole, *A Catalogue of Books Relating to the Discovery and Early History of North and South America Forming a Part of the Library of E. D. Church*, 5 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1907).
- Circa 1492:* Jay A. Levenson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1991).
- CV-ADG:* Vincennes, Château de Vincennes, Service historique de l'armée de terre, Archives du Dépôt de la guerre.
- EA:* John Alden and Dennis C. Landis, eds., *European Americana: A Chronological Guide to Works printed*

- in Europe relating to the Americas, 1493–1776*, 6 vols. (New York: Readex Books, 1980–97).
- HC1:** J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography Volume 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, IL etc.: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- HC3:** David Woodward, ed., *The History of Cartography Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- IM:** *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography*.
- HL:** San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library.
- JRM-SC:** Manchester, John Rylands Library, Department of Special Collections.
- KB:** The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.
- MC:** F. C. Wieder, *Monumenta Cartographica*, 5 vols. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1925–33).
- MCN:** Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica*, 9 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn: Uitgeverij Canaletto, 1986–2013).
- NRC:** *Nuova Raccolta Colombiana*, English edition.
- NRC-V:** Amerigo Vespucci, [*Writings*], ed. Ilaria Luzzana Caraci, 2 vols. (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1996–99).
- NRC-XI:** Gaetano Ferro et al., *Columbian Iconography*, trans. Luciano F. Farina and Carla Onorato Wysokinski (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992).
- PMC:** Armando Cortesão and Avelino Teixeira da Mota, *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*, 6 vols. (Lisbon, [s.n.], 1960).
- RC:** Repertorium Columbianum.
- RC vi, SE:** Christopher Columbus, *A Synoptic Edition of the Log of Columbus's First Voyage*, ed. Francesca Lardicci (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999).
- RC v, PM:** Pietro Martire d' Anghiera, *Selections . . .*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Eatough (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

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Maps and Monsters

Surekha Davies

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*List of abbreviations*

xxiii

- RC x, LD:* Geoffrey Symcox, ed., *Italian Reports on America, 1493–1533: Letters, Dispatches, and Papal Bulls* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).
- RC xii, AC:* Geoffrey Symcox and Luciano Formisano, eds., *Italian Reports on America, 1493–1533: Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).