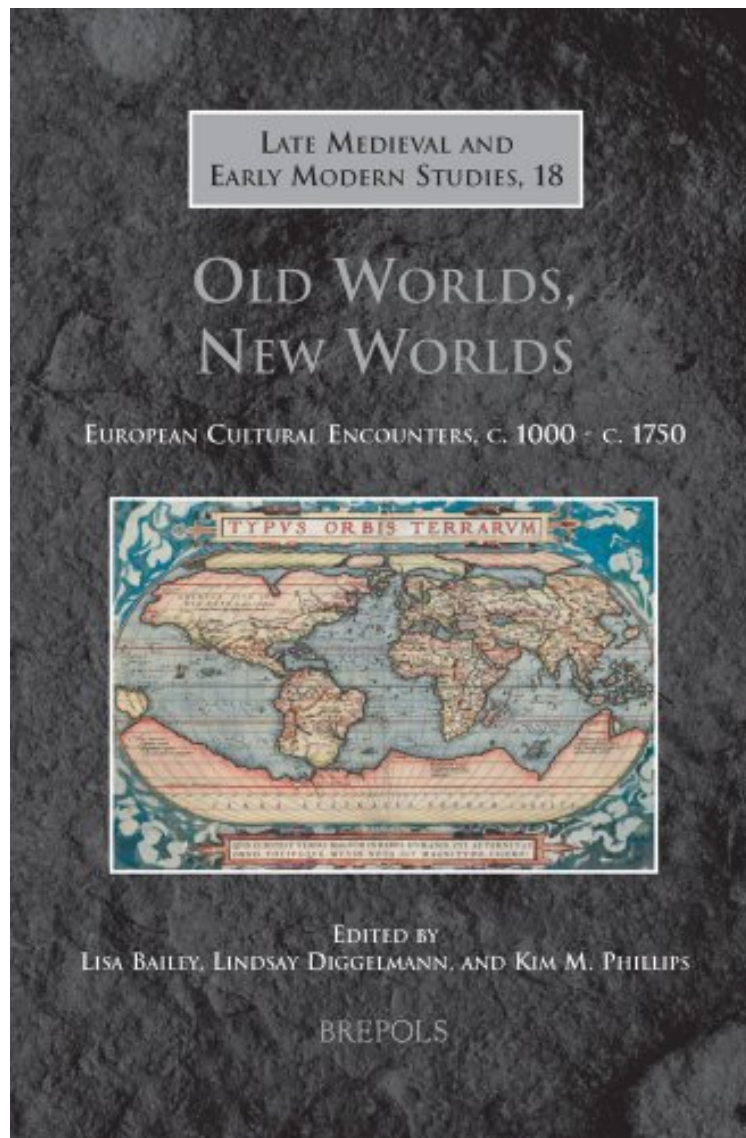


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Pre-modern European history is replete with moments of encounter. At the end of arduous sea and land journeys, and en route, Europeans met people who challenged their assumptions and certainties about the world. Some sought riches, others allies; some looked for Christian converts and some aimed for conquest. Others experienced the forced cultural encounter of exile. Many travelled only in imagination, forming ideas which have become foundational to modern mentalities: race, ethnicity, nation, and the nature of humanity. The consequences were profound: both productive and destructive. At the beginning of the third millennium CE we occupy a world shaped by those centuries of travel and encounter. This collection examines key themes and moments in European cultural expansion. Unlike many studies it spans both the medieval and early modern periods, challenging the stereotype of the post-Columbus 'age of discovery'. There is room too for examining cross-cultural relationships within Europe and regions closely linked to it, to show that curiosity, conflict and transformation could result from such meetings as they did in more far-flung realms. Several essays deal with authors, events, and ideas which will be unfamiliar to most readers but which deserve greater attention in the history of encounter and exploration.