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BENJAMIN SCHMIDT. *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World.*

Benjamin Schmidt. *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World.* (Material Texts.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. xix, 412. Cloth \$85.00, e-book \$85.00.

[John E. Wills, Jr.](#) ✉

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Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World reminds academic historians to consider the value of the book, rather than solely focusing on how the interpretations gleaned from the texts can facilitate further research. While images and objects seem peripheral to the task at hand, Benjamin Schmidt reveals the significant role they play in understanding history.

This big book is elegantly laid out and lavishly illustrated, with 24 color plates and 179 black and white images. Schmidt gives one bravura demonstration after another, usually on the same or facing page with the illustration, of how to look at pictures, compare them, and show how successive artists drew on and distorted their predecessors. Schmidt wants scholars to pay attention to books as *objects*, sometimes objects of display or casual browsing rather than sustained information. Here the historian will be crossing...

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