The shaping of Africa: cosmographic discourse and cartographic science in late medieval and early modern Europe

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Abstract: When did Africa emerge as a continent in the European mind? This book aims to trace the origins of the idea of Africa and its evolution in Renaissance thought. Particular attention is given to the relationship between the process of acquiring knowledge through travel and exploration, and its representation within a discourse which also includes previously acquired cosmographical elements. Among the themes investigated are: how did the image of Africa evolve from the conception of a symbolic space to a Euclidean representation?; how did the Renaissance rediscovery of Antiquity interact with the Portuguese discoveries along the African coast?; once Africa was circumnavigated, how was the inner landmass depicted in the absense of first-hand knowledge?; and, overall, in this whole process, what was the interplay of myth and reality?

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-- Part II The limits of symbolic space: from allegorical geometry to a figurative world
-- Part III Charting Euclidean space: the cartography of the great discoveries
-- Part IV From the form to the contents: the design of the unknown

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The Shaping of Africa: Cosmographic Discourse and Cartographic Science in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Article in Sixteenth Century Journal 35(1):191 · April 2004 with 9 Reads. DOI: 10.2307/20476849. The Africa that took shape in early modern geographies was not imagined in isolation: its cultural geography was linked to other regions of the world in a comparative system that helped to distinguish between the "barbarous" and those "worthy" to be called human, and between the "Southern Nations" and the "Northern People." Hagiography and the problem of Islam in medieval Europe. By Scott G. Bruce. Pp. xii + 160 incl. The dialogue he proposes between modern theories and ancient, medieval, and early modern texts raises important questions and offers further evidence that the nineteenth and twentieth century divisions between religion, magic, and science and between science, philosophy, and occultism have outlived their usefulness. Professor Allison P. Coudert Paul and Marie Castelfranco Chair in the Religious Studies Program University of California at Davis. Table of contents. Preface. PART ONE: ESOTERIC DISCOURSE AND THE EUROPEAN HISTORY OF RELIGION Introduction 1. Europe and the Christendom Narrative: Fro