

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910464516403321
Autore	Phillips Kim M
Titolo	Before Orientalism : Asian peoples and cultures in European travel writing, 1245-1510 // Kim M. Phillips
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia : , : University of Pennsylvania Press, , [2014] ©2014
ISBN	0-8122-0894-3
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (325 p.)
Collana	The Middle Ages series
Disciplina	303.48/209
Soggetti	Travel, Medieval - History Travelers' writings, European - History and criticism Electronic books. Asia Description and travel Early works to 1800 Asia Foreign public opinion, Western History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Note on the Text -- Introduction -- Part I. Theory, People, Genres -- Chapter 1. On Orientalism -- Chapter 2. Travelers, Tales, Audiences -- Chapter 3. Travel Writing and the Making of Europe -- Part II. Envisioning Orients -- Chapter 4. Food and Foodways -- Chapter 5. Femininities -- Chapter 6. Sex -- Chapter 7. Civility -- Chapter 8. Bodies -- Afterword: For a Precolonial Middle Ages -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- Acknowledgments
Sommario/riassunto	A distinct European perspective on Asia emerged in the late Middle Ages. Early reports of a homogeneous "India" of marvels and monsters gave way to accounts written by medieval travelers that indulged readers' curiosity about far-flung landscapes and cultures without exhibiting the attitudes evident in the later writings of aspiring imperialists. Mining the accounts of more than twenty Europeans who made-or claimed to have made-journeys to Mongolia, China, India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia between the mid-thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Kim Phillips reconstructs a medieval European vision of Asia that was by turns critical, neutral, and admiring. In offering a cultural history of the encounter between medieval Latin

Christians and the distant East, *Before Orientalism* reveals how Europeans' prevailing preoccupations with food and eating habits, gender roles, sexualities, civility, and the foreign body helped shape their perceptions of Asian peoples and societies. Phillips gives particular attention to the texts' known or likely audiences, the cultural settings within which they found a foothold, and the broader impact of their descriptions, while also considering the motivations of their writers. She reveals in rich detail responses from European travelers that ranged from pragmatism to wonder. Fear of military might, admiration for high standards of civic life and court culture, and even delight in foreign magnificence rarely assumed the kind of secular Eurocentric superiority that would later characterize Orientalism. Placing medieval writing on the East in the context of an emergent "Europe" whose explorers sought to learn more than to rule, *Before Orientalism* complicates our understanding of medieval attitudes toward the foreign.
