



UNIVERSITÉ  
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## Illustrations and first accounts of the great discoveries of the 16th century digitised and online

The Latin version of Théodore de Bry's *Voyages* is available online in its entirety for the first time. Made up of 25 sections and four supplements (29 volumes in total), *Voyages* is a unique work with a wealth of detailed illustrations.



Semi-illustrated map with manifold decorative elements (European ships, Virginian small boats, natives, villages, etc.) and various place names in Latin, English and, especially, in the native language. This is the sixteenth century's most accurate map of Virginia and North Carolina. It situates the geographical setting of the first settlement of the English in North America, the story of which is related in the first volume of the *Grands Voyages*.

High resolution pictures

## PRESS RELEASE

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The Bodmer Foundation owns a full Latin version of *Voyages* by Théodore de Bry, a sixteenth-century Protestant engraver and editor who was famous for his descriptions of the early European expeditions and the discovery of America. The 29 volumes that make up de Bry's *Grands Voyages* (Americas) and *Petits Voyages* (Africa and Asia) were published between 1590 and 1634, and include over 50 travel accounts and almost 600 engravings. With their detailed illustrations, these first written records from the Age of Discovery are an invaluable source of knowledge and references. Inaccessible as a whole until today, all the volumes of *Voyages* have been digitised by the Bodmer Lab with additional comments. They are now available to the general public and scientists without charge.

Théodore de Bry's *Voyages*, with its accounts and illustrations on the "four corners of the world" broke new ground, meaning that it is a priceless source of knowledge for historians and people researching literature and the history of art.

### Detailed illustrations from the sixteenth century

The copperplate engravings accentuate revealing details in the illustrations by the Liège-based editor. This degree of precision is rare in documents from the period, giving *Voyages* great documentary value. For example, we discover the particularities of the clothes worn by numerous overseas peoples, such as the Algonquins of Virginia, the subject of nine full-length portraits showing that each social status had a corresponding type of garment. In addition, the illustrations are extremely varied: there are maps, bestiaries and portraits depicting cultural practices from the past, such as the cannibalistic rites of the Tupinambá people in Brazil, elephant hunting in Pegu (now Burma) and the sacrificing of widows in India.

### The only complete collection of Théodore de Bry's *Voyages* available online

This set of volumes is the only complete collection of Théodore de Bry's *Voyages* available online at present. The books convey a rich seam of information about the distant lands visited by European explorers in the Renaissance. "De Bry's work also sheds light on the fantasies Renaissance Europe projected onto these lands," says Matthieu Bernhardt, a UNIGE researcher and head of the Constellation de Bry collection. "It is also shot through with a controversial aspect too, since the engravings generally tend to glorify Protestant expeditions (Dutch, English and French) and express disapproval of their Catholic counterparts (largely in Iberia), Théodore being a fervent Protestant."

## Digitisation: serving the interests of science and the general public

UNIGE's Bodmer Lab aims to digitise the content of valuable works, such as the œuvre of Théodore de Bry, and make them easily accessible online. In this instance, each digitised volume is accompanied by a descriptive notice, forming a unique educational entry. "The Bodmer Lab wants to reach a wide audience," explains Jérôme David, co-director of the research programme. "We want the general public to be able to appropriate the contents of the Constellation collection. For de Bry's *Voyages*, we decided to put a traditional entry on line alongside a more fun entry. What's more, we have added colour to some of the illustrations and made them available as thumbnail pictures."

Visitors can access the content of the works either by volume or by flipping through the illustrations. This type of access means that the general public, artists, graphic designers and other professionals can use the *Voyages* as a source of inspiration and as a documentary resource. Jean Dytar, a French comic-strip author, used several illustrations from the Constellation de Bry to create his recent work Florida.

The work of Theodore de Bry is available online [here](#).

### **About the Bodmer Lab**

*The Bodmer Lab is a UNIGE research and digitisation programme that studies and uploads seminal works from the Martin Bodmer Collection in Cologne. It does this using the tools and methods of the digital humanities. Over 20 researchers and 40 volunteers help with the digitisation, research and publication process. The mission of the Bodmer Lab is to create a digital archive of world literature from the Bodmer Collection, facilitating access to the public through research and educational support.*

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