

Mary Henes and Brian H. Murray, eds. *Travel Writing, Visual Culture and Form, 1760-1900*

Mary Henes and Brian H. Murray, eds. [*Travel Writing, Visual Culture and Form, 1760-1900*](#). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. xiv, 248p., 21 ill. ISBN 9781137543387. US \$95.00 (hardback).

This interdisciplinary collection of essays by scholars working in fields from English literature and art history to Greek and tourism studies draws on recent developments within travel studies that seek to move beyond the ‘imperial gaze’ approach that long dominated the field, introducing innovative perspectives that recognise that modern transport routes were inextricably ‘bound up with global networks of print’ (6). Travel writing was one of the dominant publishing genres for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: as such, its formal conventions were used by different participants (e.g. authors, readers, publishers, and even ‘natives’ subjected to the tourist gaze) for a variety of purposes.

The essays are divided into two sections, the first of which focuses on material collections and visual culture, bringing a literary and art-historical approach to the intersection between the print and material cultures of travel. Two of the articles present studies of travel scrapbooks: Clare Pettitt considers several instances of the genre and how they mirror and/or distort gender-based practices of travel and sociability, while Renate Dohmen examines a late-nineteenth-century scrapbook recording Millicent Pilkington’s time in India, reading the work as a multimedia performance that critiques mainstream representations of the subcontinent. Victoria Mills spans the gap between ephemeral and a more stable, ‘official’ print culture, focusing on Tauchnitz editions of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Marble Faun* which invited readers to mutually mediate their reading/travelling experiences by interacting with the edition, incorporating their own material in the shape of photographs, postcards, and the like. Simon Goldhill studies how Ottoman photographers ‘gazed back’ by packaging their own empire for Western audiences, complicating the long-established Orientalist discourse. One quibble I would raise here is that for a work that explores visual culture, the quality of the black-and-white illustrations is disappointing, especially for ephemeral material such as the Pilkington scrapbook (45) that is not easily accessible.

The second section, on locating literary form, turns to how extant narratives and the material realities of transport shaped the ways in which tourist sites were perceived. A.V. Seaton records how the rise and eventual decline of the anapaestic travel satire in the wake of Christopher Anstey’s 1766 *New Bath Guide* reflects the impact of mass mobility on literary forms. Alison Chapman documents how sonnets became an almost automatic response to a visit to certain tourist sites, particularly John Keats’s grave in Rome, while Michael Ledger-Lomas explores how Christian travellers following in the footsteps of St. Paul overlaid the modern Mediterranean with often conflicting layers of biblical, classical, and Ottoman history. Nicolas Warner focuses on the structural and thematic role of travel in three lesser-known texts by Alexander Pushkin. The work concludes with Peter Garratt’s exploration of how the realities of travel in the mid-Victorian period shaped Ruskin’s thought on art and architecture, the new aesthetics of speed being at odds with his contemplative ideal.

As the above summary suggests, this is a wide-ranging set of essays, with the pros and cons that such

an endeavour inevitably entails: while it certainly fulfils its brief in providing stimulating new avenues of thought in travel writing, well summarised in the introduction, not all articles will be of equal interest to an audience of book historians. The latter articles in particular touch on the field only tangentially, if at all. Having said that, book history as a field has shown an increasing willingness in recent years to engage with neighbouring fields, and interesting cross-fertilisations may arise in unexpected places: as such, SHARPists with an interest in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visual culture may well find much here of interest.

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