# Introduction

NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

Travel narratives have existed for millennia: so long as people have journeyed, they have told stories about their travels. The two activities go hand in hand. In pre- or non-literate societies these stories were spoken or sung or depicted in visual art. Aboriginal Australians' Dreamtime stories, for example, preserve and transmit ancient tales of creation. Ceremonial songs are chanted as the singer moves through the landscape. Aborigines' alternative sense of history and of the sacredness of the land, which they see as animate, illustrates how different some other cultural stories of travel are from Western approaches. Dreamtime, Stephen Muecke and Adam Shoemaker have noted, is 'not a chronological concept ... but a focus on, and a vital connection with, ancestral beings who travelled the length and breadth of the continent, forming the natural features of the landscape and social relationships with humankind at the same time'.<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal people 'can be sure about their belonging in places; historical time becomes far less important'.<sup>2</sup> There is an implication in this statement that non-Aborigines cannot be sure about belonging in places, which is in itself a powerful trope in post-industrial writing, as well as being allied to a sense of loss and displacement that goes back to the story of the Fall.

Aboriginal conceptions of the land and of one's relationship to it also contrast with those of the West. There is an emphasis on being a custodian of the Dreaming, and of the land.<sup>3</sup> The facets implicit here – of memory, orality, respect, harmony, preservation, community, non-linearity – that are associated with ancient cultures are present in many post-industrial critiques of modern attitudes. They are reintroduced into certain types of travel writing (including what has been labelled 'the new nature writing'), as we shall see below. In texts such as Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987) they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Stephen Muecke and Adam Shoemaker, Aboriginal Australians: First Nations of an Ancient

Continent (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

#### NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

become an attractive counterpoint to the modern, commercially driven and industrial West.<sup>4</sup>

Yet despite differences of conception and approach, in most cultures narratives have returned repeatedly to tropes of travel. They appear in Gilgamesh and Enkidu's journey to the Cedar Forest in what is possibly the oldest surviving piece of literature in the world, the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh. They are as much a part of the biblical stories of the Fall or the Exodus, as they are of Kālidāsa's fifth-century CE classical Sanskrit poem, Meghadūta (The Cloud Messenger), whose lyrical, secular chorography traces the contours of India as a stray cloud carries the message of an exiled nature spirit to his distant lover. In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus's struggles to return home from Troy to Ithaca demonstrate how inextricably human movement, both individual and collective, factual and imaginative, was linked to literature and mythography. Even travel writing, as distinct from oral tales, has a history that goes back thousands of years. An Egyptian tomb records four journeys made by Harkuf, an emissary of the pharaohs, in the third century BCE. Harkuf has been called 'the first long-distance traveler whose name we know' and 'the first one to leave a written account, or narrative, of his journeys'.<sup>5</sup> Maria Pretzler proposes that the early written travel accounts were 'probably ... sea-farers' logs, preserving information about distances, landmarks and harbours to facilitate orientation for future voyages'. She suggests that these are probably the origin of the periplous, 'an ancient genre of texts describing coastlines'.<sup>6</sup> Another type of text that may be seen as one of the antecedents of travel writing is the stadiasmus - a genre that lists places and distances along overland routes.7

One might already discern from this brief discussion what are often classified as the two main types of travel account: the mythological or supernatural on the one hand (which we might extend to or sum up as storytelling) and the documentary function on the other. Whether or how far these properties of travel writing may be accommodated within a single generic description rather than having their own labels is a matter of debate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Robert Clarke, "New Age Trippers": Aboriginality and Australian New Age Travel Books', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13/1 (February 2009), 27–43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Stephen S. Gosch and Peter N. Stearns, *Premodern Travel in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Maria Pretzler, *Pausanias: Travel Writing in Ancient Greece* (London: Duckworth, 2007), p. 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For this and Roman itinerary literature in general, see essays in Richard Talbert and Kai Brodersen (eds.), *Space in the Roman World: Its Perception and Presentation* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004).

# CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press 978-1-107-14818-5 — The Cambridge History of Travel Writing Edited by Nandini Das , Tim Youngs Excerpt <u>More Information</u>

# Introduction

As we shall see, some authors are keen not to confuse the documentary or journalistic ends of travel writing with storytelling and fiction. Of course, from another perspective the stories that some might dismiss as mythical are, to those who tell them, a way of seeing and understanding the world that is as legitimate as that promoted by Western science.

What inflects the nature of the travel text is frequently a matter of voice. Classical travel narratives are often third person accounts, descriptions of journeys undertaken by someone else, or treatises formed out of the information accumulated from such journeys. Medieval customs of pilgrimage, however, introduced a sense of individual experience as well as structure in such descriptions of travel.<sup>8</sup> The overall emphasis would be very different from the forms of personal reflection that we tend to expect from travel writing today, but in both European and non-European traditions, the pilgrim's individual encounter with the world shaped the writing in particular ways. Exploring what is revealed of medieval conceptions of selfhood, as well as nuancing our understanding of medieval perceptions of the self and the other, therefore emerge repeatedly as themes in the study of medieval travel writing, often complicated by other markers of identity, such as gender, or race. One of the earliest medieval pilgrimage accounts is by a woman: the late fourth-century letter by the otherwise unknown Egeria or Aetheria is the first eyewitness account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land that we know of in the European tradition. Even Egeria's characteristic contemptus mundi, her selfeffacement and avoidance of detail, is indicative of a particular form of engagement with the world. It heralds the tension that would emerge later in two strands of European travel writing: 'one of absolute interest in the external world, as in Wonders of the East or Mandeville's Travels, and one exploring the subjective and autobiographical capacities of the form -The Booke of Margery Kempe or Robinson Crusoe'.9

Elsewhere in non-European traditions, too, the ways in which individual and collective imperatives of the pilgrimage come together to shape travel writing are illuminating. Studies of Islamic travel, and in particular of the travel narrative called the *rihla*, which both created and enabled the fundamental concept of a connected Islamic world, *Dār al-Islām* ('House of Islam'),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Jonathan Sumption's survey in *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975) and Christian K. Zacher's *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: The Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) provide useful starting points in the field. Other resources include Larissa J. Taylor et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Mary Baine Campbell, The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 31.

#### NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

challenge earlier claims, put forth within Western historiography, of a lack of Muslim interest in the wider world. As Nabil Matar has pointed out, that strand of scholarship, epitomised by Bernard Lewis's influential work, represents not so much an absence within the Islamic world, as it demonstrates a telling disregard of the long tradition of Islamic travel within non-Islamic historiography.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, a richly complex history of responses that interrogated the self, the home, and the world in various ways emerges in the accounts of Jewish travellers like Benjamin of Tudela (fl. 1173), or the classical Chinese negotiation of collective memory and tradition that shaped the resulting travel accounts into particular representations of sensibility as well as of place.<sup>11</sup>

A growing awareness of this range of global narratives and of the potential comparisons and differences they reveal has emerged in present medieval historical and literary studies, influenced to some extent no doubt by the increasing availability of texts in translation and in digital form. One concurrent development that continues to draw attention to the rich potential of such accounts has been a 'global turn' in the field, which emphasises the connections and exchanges that existed across geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries globally, long before the early modern period of voyages and exploration.<sup>12</sup> Religious travelogues of course constitute only a part of the wide range of texts produced by that global mobility, which consists also of a substantial body of secular travel. In Europe, while the initial premise of the mid-fourteenth-century Travels of Sir John Mandeville was to provide a pilgrimage guide to the Holy Land, it was its inexorable appetite for the novelties that lay beyond that known territory, in the furthest corners of the medieval world, that made it one of the most influential and widely circulated travel texts of the period. Similarly popular was the Travels of Marco Polo, written down by Rustichello da Pisa and describing Polo's travels through Asia, Persia, China, and Indonesia between 1276 and 1291.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Bernard Lewis, The Muslim Discovery of Europe (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), and Islam and the West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Nabil Matar (ed. and trans.), In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Routledge, 2003); Nizar F. Hermes, The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture, Ninth-Twelfth Century AD (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See, among others, Martin Jacobs, Reorienting the East: Jewish Travelers to the Medieval Muslim World (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Flora Li-tsui Fu, Framing Famous Mountains: Grand Tour and Mingshan Paintings in Sixteenth-century China (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009); Xiaofei Tian, Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center, 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> For a review of this developing scholarship, see K. M. Phillips, 'Travel, Writing, and the Global Middle Ages'. *History Compass*, 14 (2016), 81–92.

# Introduction

In various ways, such texts not only record a rapidly developing awareness of a world beyond Continental Europe, but also use their descriptions of foreign cultures to serve as a way of evaluating and commenting on one's own.

Despite that long history, travel writing, in its literary sense at least, is generally thought of as a more modern phenomenon, beginning in its informational guise in Europe with the colonial and mercantile expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Moveable print technology was a significant factor, not only helping to open up new directions for travel writing, but also offering authors a public voice and influence that would have been inconceivable in a pre-printing-press age. In Britain, that drive is epitomised by Richard Hakluyt and his foundational collection, the Principall Navigations. First appearing in 1589 at a length of 825 pages, and filling three folio volumes at around 2,000 pages by its second edition in 1598-1600, it is a triumph of the printer's as well as the travellers' and the editor's enterprise.<sup>13</sup> The centrality of this body of texts in helping to define many of the political, cultural, and economic concepts that we associate with the early modern world has long been established. From New Historicism's attention to the negotiations of power, rhetoric, and representation, particularly in accounts of the New World, to a growing attempt to re-evaluate Old World encounters between Europe and Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, early modern travel writing has provided rich grounds for interdisciplinary discussions that range from art history to gender studies, postcolonialism and cultural studies.<sup>14</sup> A third, more recent strand is dependent on the same rise of global history and history of globalisation whose influence has been noted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For discussions of Hakluyt, see for example Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt (eds.), *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The following references are only indicative of the breadth of the field: Stephen Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion', originally published 1981, revised in Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 21-65; Stephen Greenblatt, Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture (London: Routledge, 1990); Stephen Greenblatt, Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Jeffrey Knapp, An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Andrew Hadfield, Literature, Travel and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds.), The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); John Michael Archer, Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing (Stanford University Press, 2001); Richmond Barbour, Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626 (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gerald M. MacLean, The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West (London: Reaktion, 2000); Louis Montrose, 'The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery', Representations,

#### NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

above in medieval studies. Attending to travel accounts as records of global crosscurrents of travel, transculturality, mediation, and conflict, explored variously as 'connected histories' and as part of a 'global renaissance', such scholarship often balances its focus on global movements with a renewed attention to the microhistory of individual lives marked by travel and human mobility.<sup>15</sup>

From Hakluyt to his successors like Samuel Purchas, English travel writing imagined and enabled the connections between travel, nation, commerce, and colonial expansion that have been evident in so much travel writing, and that would appear strongly again in the mid to late nineteenth century. It is a development that, perhaps unsurprisingly, is consanguineous with another significant narrative development in the history of literature - the rise of prose fiction and the modern novel in the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Daniel Defoe's Moll Flanders (1722), Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742) and Tom Jones (1749), and Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy (1759-67) and A Sentimental Journey (1768), are among the eighteenth-century fictions whose plots are structured around the travels of their heroes and that draw on the conventions of the picaresque. The misfortunes of their mock-heroic narrators are inherited by their descendants. The link between travel writing and these novels is close. The authors of the latter also wrote travel books, and 'the eighteenth century ... witnessed a new era in which non-fiction travel literature achieved an unparalleled popularity'.<sup>17</sup> Defoe wrote A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain (1724–6), and Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon (1755). Indeed, many of the fictions are modelled on

33 (1991), 1–41; Claire Jowitt, Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589–1642 (Manchester University Press, 2003); Joan-Pau Rubiés, Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250–1625 (Cambridge University Press, 2000); Surekha Davies, Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps and Monsters (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

- <sup>15</sup> See, for instance, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Explorations in Connected History: From the Tagus to the Ganges (Oxford University Press, 2004); and Jyotsna Singh (ed.), A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), among others. The contribution of biographies of travellers is illustrated by studies such as Natalie Zemon Davis, Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Three Ways to Be Alien (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011); Linda Colley, The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh (London: HarperCollins, 2007); John-Paul Ghobrial, 'The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory', Past and Present, 222/1 (2014), 51–93.
- <sup>16</sup> Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (1957; London: Hogarth Press, 1987).
- <sup>17</sup> Charles L. Batten, Jr, Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 1.

# Introduction

varieties of the travel book. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726, 1735), have grown into powerful cultural myths. The former is often heralded by scholars as the first great capitalist novel, and modern travel literature's identification with the individual self is linked to the growth of capitalism in the eighteenth century. Nigel Leask explains that, 'The eighteenth-century popularity of books of voyages and travels reflected the rise of European commercial and colonial expansion.'<sup>18</sup> At the end of that century, Mary Wollstonecraft writes that: 'I found I could not avoid being continually the first person – "the little hero of each tale."<sup>19</sup>

Nineteenth-century travel writing sees the continuation of the emerging literary self of travel, with the development of the Romantic figure (Mungo Park is a prominent travel author in this mode). According to Carl Thompson, Wordsworth and Byron are 'especially influential in terms of establishing new personae, and new patterns of travel, for subsequent generations of British travellers'.<sup>20</sup> Besides – or accompanying – self-dramatisation, 'the influence of romance, sentimentalism, and Gothic all have some part to play in the Romantic interest in travel as misadventure', as do the sublime, primitivism, and pedestrianism.<sup>21</sup> Romantic poetry also incorporated images and motifs from earlier voyages and travels. Coleridge claims to have been reading Purchas's anthology of travels while composing 'Kubla Khan' and enjoyed Mandeville's *Travels*.<sup>22</sup>

The nineteenth century saw British travel writing assume an unprecedented reach across the world as 'discoveries' and colonial and imperialist activity increased on a huge scale. Much anglophone and other European travel writing of the century is allied to a similar movement, accompanying and even facilitating it. In particular, the century is marked by a proliferation of exploration narratives. These often combine scientific and commercial interests, with the former including various branches of the physical and human sciences. Among the latter, quasi-scientific theories of race were tested in and popularised by explorers' texts, most notably in Central Africa and Australasia. In Africa, David Livingstone championed the spread of what

 <sup>19</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark (1796; Fontwell: Centaur Press, 1970), p. xvii.
<sup>20</sup> Carl Thompson, The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination (Oxford: Clarendon)

<sup>22</sup> Donald R. Howard, Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and their Posterity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 1–2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Nigel Leask, Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840: 'From an Antique Land' (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Carl Thompson, The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

#### NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

became known as the three Cs: Christianity, commerce, and civilisation. Narratives of travel by missionaries, emigrants, colonial officials and their wives, soldiers, and hunters, joined those by explorers and scientists to be consumed by an expanding market as levels of literacy rose and urban audiences grew. Reflecting this and containing many of the elements above – scientific and quasi-scientific observations, imperialism, commerce – the travel books of Henry Morton Stanley embody several of the travel and narrative features of the age. In addition, their mixture of journalism, celebrity, adventure, and allusions to the Bible, the classics, earlier explorers, and popular stories show par excellence the melange of discourses that comprise travel writing.<sup>23</sup>

It was Stanley's writings and journeys that influenced the troubled critique of British and European endeavour in the Congo in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899, 1902). That novella, picking up on Stanley's depiction of the dark continent, evident in the titles of his volumes *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) and *In Darkest Africa* (1890), expresses the doubts and questioning of empire but also examines the effects upon the self of penetrating what is perceived as a hostile region. This fictional treatment of 'going native' sets up a symbolic correlation between the interior of a country and that of the mind. It also reinforces such a strong association that more than a century later, texts on the Congo still turn to it as a reference point, whether to affirm or (infrequently) controvert it.<sup>24</sup>

Although fictional, *Heart of Darkness* helps usher in travel texts that construct parallel journeys. Such narratives, propelled especially by the popularisation of Freud's ideas on the unconscious, link interior and exterior, psychological and physical journeys. Critics tend to regard the linking of these aspects as a feature of modern travel writing that distinguishes it from the texts of earlier centuries. Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps* (1936), which quotes Conrad and conjoins Greene's experiences of West Africa with his childhood development in Britain, is seen as the classic example. Others include Jenny Diski's *Skating to Antarctica* (1997), in which the author's participation in a cruise to Antarctica combines with an inward journey into her troubled past. The whiteness of the Antarctic complements her wish for blankness during earlier periods of depression.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> On Stanley, see, for example, Tim Youngs, Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850–1900 (Manchester University Press, 1994), esp. chaps. 4 and 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See Tim Youngs, 'Africa/The Congo: The Politics of Darkness', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 156–73.

# Introduction

One argument has it that as the world becomes more mapped and there are fewer, if any, blank spaces left in it, so travellers turn inward into their psyche and memories, making their journey as much an interior as a physical one. Yet numerous accounts, particularly those of travellers often stretched to the limits of human endurance - whether on polar expeditions, or on mountain and desert treks - testify to the way travel has always offered the potential of an inward journey. Furthermore, the oft-expressed idea that there is nowhere left to explore in the modern world other than one's inner self overlooks some activities. Urban exploration, for example, is a thriving practice, and with it the vogue for ruined, abandoned places.<sup>25</sup> Suburban exploration is a linked endeavour. This is so in the sense of investigating underneath cities, as well as outside them.<sup>26</sup> The notion that modern travel writing is heading inwards because the outside world no longer has any unexplored places understates its continued external engagement. Travel is no less bound up now with economic expansion and with conflicts, for example, than it was in previous centuries.

It is tempting to claim that late twentieth- and twenty-first-century travel texts are more cognisant of and sensitive towards other cultures' beliefs and outlooks. The foot of the contents page of Muecke and Shoemaker's book on Australian Aborigines, for example, has a warning (similar to those in many Australian museums) that 'there are images of Aboriginal people now deceased in this book and that viewing those images could cause distress in some Indigenous communities'.<sup>27</sup> Yet travel writing, like travel itself, still depends largely upon the distinction between self and other. Often, that distinction continues to be made through the rehashing of crude stereotypes. Texts that empathise with the other or that experiment with alternative points of view are few and consumed by a minority. We must be wary of assuming that most contemporary travel texts are more enlightened in their outlook and even of believing that most travel accounts resemble those discussed here. Although prominent or significant for their counterpoints, our selections may not reflect dominant strains.

<sup>27</sup> Muecke and Shoemaker, Aboriginal Australians, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> On the former see, for example, Ninjalicious [John Chapman], Access all Areas: A User's Guide to the Art of Urban Exploration, 3rd edn (s.l., 2005); on the latter, Rebecca Litchfield, Soviet Ghosts written by Tristi Brownett, Neill Cockwill, and Owen Evans (np: Carpet Bombing Culture, 2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> On beneath cities, see, for example, Tim Youngs, 'Urban Recesses: Memory, Nature and the City', in Françoise Besson, Claire Omhovère, Héliane Ventura (eds.), *The Memory of Nature in Aboriginal, Canadian and American Contexts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), pp. 31–42, and on outside or around them, Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital: A Walk around the M25* (2002; London: Penguin, 2003).

#### NANDINI DAS AND TIM YOUNGS

Above, we have sketched something of the history of travel writing. One of the aims of the present volume is to provide a detailed overview of the origins and development of the genre. There have been single-volume surveys of and introductions to travel writing.<sup>28</sup> Multi-volume encyclopedias, as well as collections of criticism, also exist.<sup>29</sup> Previous historical studies of the genre tend to focus on particular periods, if not regions too, and consequently are not so likely to reach and inform readers with interests outside those boundaries. But there is now a need to take stock of and move beyond the tranche of guides to and surveys of travel writing, many of which, unavoidably, cover common ground. A real challenge for scholars who specialise in particular historical periods or in specific regions or societies is to reach nonspecialists, within and outside the academy. Only by increasing our knowledge of travel writing can we test assumptions instead of taking them for granted. This History builds on the introductory and survey works that have been published since Paul Fussell's elegiac Abroad (1980) helped draw serious attention to travel writing, though we do not assume that our readers have prior knowledge of these titles.<sup>30</sup> Our range of essays ensures not only a range of expertise but multiple perspectives, too. It has become a truism that studies of travel writing admit to the difficulty of defining their object of study. For our purposes, we take travel writing to be the written record (usually in prose but sometimes in poetry) of travel that has actually been undertaken by the author-narrator. Our History does however include discussion of cognate forms and, at times, of fictional treatments of journeys.

The volume is intended to be more than a history: we wish also to introduce and examine critical approaches to travel writing since these are also part of the history of travel-writing scholarship. Thus we have organised it in the following way. The first part provides a historical overview, with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> See, for example, Barbara Korte, English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations, trans. Catherine Matthias (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Hulme and Youngs (eds.), Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing; Carl Thompson, Travel Writing (London: Routledge, 2011); Peter Whitfield, Travel: A Literary History (Oxford: Bodleian Press, 2011); Tim Youngs, The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> For example, David Buisseret (gen. ed.), The Oxford Companion to World Exploration, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press in association with the Newberry Library, 2007); Raymond John Howgego, The Encyclopedia of Exploration, 5 vols. (Potts Point, NSW: Hordern House, 2003–13); Jennifer Speake (ed.), Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia, 3 vols. (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003). For criticism, see Tim Youngs and Charles Forsdick (eds.), Travel Writing: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, 4 vols. (London: Routledge, 2012); and Carl Thompson (ed.), The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Paul Fussell, Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).