Benjamin Colbert and Lucy Morrison, Editors.
***Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture, 1814–1900*.**
Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. 343. ISBN 978-3-030-36145-7. ISBN 978-3-030-36146 -4 (e-Book)

In recent decades travel writing and its theorizing have been gaining popularity – both among researchers in the humanities and in the general reading public. Although the global health crisis of 2020 has slowed down the production of travel accounts, the insightful and enlightening discussion of the genre continues to enjoy a period of noticeable flourishing, as evidenced by this volume. The book comprises eleven chapters written by prominent contemporary scholars in the field. It deals with continental travel writing in the nineteenth century and covers a wide range of fascinating subjects. Although the chapters follow a relatively strict chronological order, the range of subjects is very broad and well selected, which adds to the appeal such a collection might have for both scholars and lovers of the genre.

In "Ephemeral Entertainment: *Montagnes Russes* and Movement in Paris" Lucy Morrison discusses one particular type of cultural attraction after the Napoleonic wars – the Paris roller coasters. She uses the *Montagnes Russes* to provide a glimpse into the mind of the mass tourist of the time, arguing that the desire to see new, less explored spaces led people to abandon the traditional experience offered by the Grand Tour. The French roller coasters, which flourished for about a decade, provided one such opportunity. The power of the *Montagnes Russes* to attract people from all social strata and of both genders, regardless of their education, turned them into a unique social vortex, a peculiar liminal space between the past and the future. In addition, just like travel writing itself, the *montagnes russes* phenomenon "challenged gender conventions and gender roles" (18).

"'Dieting with Antiquity': Eating and Drinking with the Ancients at Pompeii" deals with another popular early nineteenth-century tourist site – the ancient city of Pompeii – and the practice of open-air picnicking there. Chloe Chard argues that in the minds of many visitors a meal in the open air provided the traveller with "a kind of enhanced access to the ancient past" (63), quoting Percy Bysshe Shelley's expression "dieting with antiquity" (66). It appears that to partake of a simple, frugal meal at this particular site enabled the nineteenth-century visitor to experience – in his or her mind – a certain cultural authority over ancient Rome.

Kathryn Walchester's contribution, "Beyond the Grand Tour: Norway and the Nineteenth-Century British Traveller," is another chapter in this volume that explores the theme of the travellers' desire to visit less well-known spaces and the subsequent ironic commercialization of their "out-of-the-way" experiences. While in the past Norway had been visited by a handful of British adventurers – usually male – interested in either science or hunting, after 1820 a steadier stream of travellers began to arrive, attracted by the unconventionality of the destination and the seeming lack of famous historical sites requiring, as it were, the visitors to have received an elite education. The British visitors were also attracted by Norway's "association with nature and traditional rural values" (202).

In the chapter "Upper-Class Travel with a Political Slant: The Destinies of Nations and Empires through the Eyes of Lord and Lady Strangford" Ludmilla Kostova offers an insightful look at two authors – husband and wife – whose travel writing has fallen into relative obscurity. She points out that one of the characteristics of this type of research is recovering and reinterpreting "neglected texts from the past and thus rescu[ing] their authors from oblivion" (177). The analysis focuses primarily on their jointly written travelogue *The Eastern Shores of the Adriatic in 1863: With a Visit to Montenegro* (1864) and on the way the two travellers' activities influenced the formation of a Bulgarian national identity. An intellectual and linguistic prodigy, Lord Strangford had a fascination with peoples who were in the process of forging their modern identities. He also expressed the progressive opinion that scholars should guard against politicizing their field of study and privileging certain ethnic groups (179). Kostova points out that *The Eastern Shores of the Adriatic* is an example of "gendered travel writing" (181) and that unlike in her earlier travelogue, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines* (1861), which her future husband roundly criticized, Lady Strangford assumes the role of a modest female traveller who largely leaves her husband to comment on political issues and handle such "edged-tools" as politics and ethnology.

Kostova also draws the readers' attention to a curious contradiction in Lord Strangford's views: he defines ethnology as an "inexact and tentative science," yet he strongly advises ethnologists to discuss their material "in as strictly abstract and scientific a spirit as [they] can" (188). The analysis conducted in this chapter clearly demonstrates that Lord and Lady Strangford's writings do indeed deserve significant scholarly attention.

A very unusual traveller, Ménie Dowie, is presented in "Gender, Genre, and Geography in Ménie Dowie's *A Girl in the Karpathians*" by Katarina Gephardt. One side of her unconventionality manifested itself in her appearance and behaviour: "she rode cross-saddle, wore knickerbockers, smoked cigarettes, climbed mountains, bathed nude in streams, slept in peasants' huts, and ate their food" (243). She was related to the late nineteenth-century New Woman movement which sought to challenge restrictive gender norms and stereotypes; it is no coincidence that the Canadian edition of the travelogue was titled *A Girl in Trousers: Being a History of a Young Girl's Adventures in the Karpathians.* Gephardt argues that contrary to some critics' opinion, Dowie's destination is significant. She views the eastern Carpathians, where the Scottish woman travelled, as a liminal space enabling her to write an anti-travelogue and subvert many of the conventions of established travel writing. She points out that the elimination of the geographical map in later editions of the hugely successful book served to strengthen this subversion. Dowie also managed to escape Victorian middle-class gender constrains and offer her readers a "rhetorically sophisticated performance of gender" (244). Another poignant observation Gephardt makes is that in contrast to most travel narratives which tend to magnify the otherness of the foreign lands, Dowie "domesticates the Carpathians through frequent comparisons to Scotland" (254).

Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture, 1814–1900 demonstrates that nineteenth-century travel writing can hold a considerable fascination for scholars and has a great potential to be of interest to "lay" lovers of the genre as well. The contributors reveal the diversity of travel experiences at a time when Great Britain was a formidable colonial power. They also point to connections with past and future imagological trends. The volume is exceptionally informative and makes a substantial contribution to the study of travel writing.

Department of English and American Studies **Pavel Petkov**
University of Veliko Tarnovo

CORRESPONDENCE: Assoc. Prof. Pavel Petkov, PhD, Department of English and American Studies, University of Veliko Tarnovo, 2 Teodosi Tarnovski St., Veliko Tarnovo 5003, Bulgaria. @ p.petkov@ts.uni-vt.bg