

Gábor Gelléri, *Lessons of Travel in Eighteenth-century France. From Grand Tour to School Trips* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020, 235p.) 978-1-78327-436-9, £75.

After his studies on travellers visiting England in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>1</sup>, Gábor Gelléri focuses his second monograph on France. The author analyses a wide range of texts belonging to the hybrid genre of travel advice literature: the *ars apodemica*. These prescriptive texts are described as “a discussion of whether one should travel, and how to make travel beneficial” (p.205) but Gelléri goes the extra-mile by analysing them as a “discourse on practice” (p.7) and a “practice of discourse” (p.140). To do so, Gelléri structures his book in six distinct and complementary chapters, which constantly refer to one another.

In the first chapter, Gelléri starts by defining the Grand Tour, reminding the importance of arts of travel by Justus Lipsius and Montaigne (p.17-54). He then proposes a case study of diplomacy (p.55-84), which spans from 1680 to 1830 and presents a type of travel adapted for the professional training of diplomats. The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, entitled “Trading with men, dealing with god: abbé Pluche’s ideas on travel” (p.85-106), presents the unusual views of Pluche who justified sending his trader son abroad with theological arguments. In his 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, the author manages to provide an interesting analysis of *Emile* by questioning Rousseau’s status as an author of travel literature (p.107-138). Gelléri then moves on towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by interrogating the role of travel in the prizes delivered by the continental academies, by using the Academy of Lyon as a case study in the years 1785-1787 (p.139-170). Finally, the author concludes his book with examples of collective travel (p.171-201). These are testimonies of a change in the philosophy of travel, which stressed the improvement of scientific knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> *Philosophies du voyage: Visiter l’Angleterre aux 17<sup>e</sup>–18<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Gábor Gelléri. Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2016. xi + 298 pp. £60.,

One of the strong points of Gelléri's book is his mastery of the immense bibliography about the arts of travel, which he has thoroughly compiled in French, English, and German, but he is cautious enough to acknowledge that there is still so much work to be done in order to be anywhere near a complete picture on this topic (introduction p.1-16). This enables the reader to understand his methodology which puts aside a transnational approach to instead focus on a national one that is "just as valid" (p.12) and allows Gelléri to investigate his French corpus in minute detail. As such, what is really to be applauded is Gelléri's ability to offer fresh analyses of well-known texts, such as Rousseau's *Emile ou De L'Education* (p.107). He has also managed to shine a light on little-scrutinised texts such *Le Recueil amusant de voyages* by the Marquis de Pezay in chapter 1 or Abbé Pluche's *Le spectacle de la nature* in Chapter 3. An even more obscure text is an art of travel – entitled *L'Art de Voyager Utilement* – attributed to Jean-Baptiste Chévremont, who was the secretary of Charles V, Duke of Lorraine (p.59). To top it all, the professional historians will appreciate that the book is completed by an online database: "Art of Travel 1500-1850"<sup>2</sup>, which is further described by an article published in collaboration with Daniel Carey and Anders Ingram in the online journal *Viatica*.<sup>3</sup>

Besides, Gelléri is constantly linking the social and intellectual benefits of travel with its moral and sexual danger, and carefully examines the question of whom should be allowed to travel and for what reasons. Apart from the physical danger of venturing on the continent, he presents the various parameters considered when one was sent abroad: social status, age, gender, class, whether to be guided by a tutor, etc. This approach not only enriches his analysis but also provides an essential context to readers less versed in his subject. However difficult it is to find faults in this work, the present reviewer might regret that Gelléri did not study the recommendations offered to naturalists. This could have completed his approach and help

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://artoftravel.nuigalway.ie/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://revues-msh.uca.fr/viatica/docannexe/file/1370/carrey\\_gelle\\_ri\\_ingram.pdf](https://revues-msh.uca.fr/viatica/docannexe/file/1370/carrey_gelle_ri_ingram.pdf)

understand the evolution of the intellectual history of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, although his nationalistic approach is understandable, more comparisons with *ars apodemica* written in other European languages could have nicely completed his work, thereby framing his own exploration in a wider context.

In conclusion, these minor criticisms cannot tarnish Gabor Gelléri's illuminating work. He has written a detailed study that reaches its goal of filling the historiographic gap on travel in 18<sup>th</sup> century France. Gelléri offers interesting insight into the mechanisms and functions of travel advice literature by examining its forms of discourse with great care. Finally, this 2<sup>nd</sup> monograph is constantly enhanced by Gelléri's personal website who make it a point of honour to update news about his explorations of the arts of travel.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, this marks a new step in the digital humanities, in which paper publications are frequently extended online, therefore mustering further research and interest on the subject at hand.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://cultureoftravel.wordpress.com/>