

## Visual Images in Travel Writing

STEPHANIE LEITCH

As important elements of the visual apparatus of books, images in travel literature embellish stories and entice buyers. Depictions of peoples and prospects in these accounts inflect readers' sense of place, establish authors' reputation for truth-telling, and create fervour for travel, both real and imagined. In the early modern period, establishing otherness was an important function of travel illustration, but such strategies evolved as the European marketplace for print took shape. Accounts of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville populated remote areas with images of monstrous peoples whose marginal humanity reinforced their distance from a moral and theological centre.<sup>1</sup> As reports of human populations supplanted those of monsters in the text, images of marvellous beings soon gave way to stock images of peoples that also survived repeated retellings through recycling. Once anchored as features of travel accounts, depictions of peoples were shaped by increasing specificity. These newly descriptive images enhanced the author's credibility; the authoritative nature of these images, in turn, reshaped narrative strategies. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts, images became central to certifying the author's eyewitness claims. Illustrations accompanying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelogues served as visual warrants that underwrote scientific missions. As travel images increasingly posited the traveller as a first-hand observer, they helped establish empirical inquiry as a method and even stabilised subjects for investigation.

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters', ed. E. H. Gombrich, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), 159–97 (esp. pp. 166–71). For the monstrous races in America, see Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America: Representations of the Other* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 97–117. For the shifting fortunes of monsters in early modern discourses on humanity, see Surekha Davies, *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps and Monsters* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 1–46, 148–82.

This chapter explores the look and function of images in travel literature from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. While its emphasis will be on published travel reports during the initial period of European contact with Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and the dawn of the great travel anthologies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it will also gesture to subsequent periods, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in particular. Its focus is on the sources of the images, the important dialogue those images constructed with other genres, and the relationship of word and image in travel publications, as well as on the epistemological function of the copied image.

### Early Printing and the Other

In the early years of printing, images in travel accounts were produced in workshops where artisans simply repurposed woodblocks of wild men and women or Adam and Eve to illustrate accounts of faraway peoples and places. One of the earliest travel volumes to reject such stereotypes was Bernard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Mainz, 1486), a large and lavishly illustrated account of pilgrims' progress to the Holy Land. Breydenbach took along Erhard Reuwich (active 1483–6), an artist from Utrecht, to record specific sights gathered along the way. Breydenbach's preface marketed the book as an eyewitness account, a claim he staked on images generated from the artist's first-hand observation. Even though the *Peregrinatio* aimed to galvanise support for crusade, images in this travel volume enlivened the landscape of Jerusalem with depictions of multi-ethnic peoples, displaying their dress and customs.<sup>2</sup> While proto-ethnographic elements can be traced in many early modern travel genres, as Joan-Pau Rubiés cautions, a full consideration of the type of ethnographic writing must consider the traveller's agenda and audience.<sup>3</sup> Images appearing in the texts require similar analyses and we must also consider the context and conventions of printing.

Travel reports of merchants of the early sixteenth century were expeditiously printed and therefore sparsely illustrated. Reports from the early decades of the sixteenth century, especially those of Columbus and Vespucci, circulated as small pamphlet editions whose images relied on visual

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book: Breydenbach's Peregrinatio from Venice to Jerusalem* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), pp. 55–99.

<sup>3</sup> See Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel Writing and Ethnography', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 242–61.

shorthand to render encountered peoples. The title-pages of several of these pamphlets placed Spanish or Portuguese regents on shorelines opposite groups of naked people, separated by a body of water to suggest distance. The reductive pictorial formulae used to render newly 'discovered' peoples enhanced their difference from Europeans. A few of these encounters were also dramatised as visually enticing broadsheets with brief text excerpted from longer pamphlet versions. Broadsheets based on Amerigo Vespucci's account published in Augsburg and Leipzig c.1505 followed older cartographic practice of illuminating coastlines with people and vegetation, but they also showed the bodies of indigenous Americans with increasing specificity in feathered costumes, with facial piercings, and bearing weapons.<sup>4</sup>

Travel images must be considered at the intersection of representations circulating in cosmographic texts, merchants' reports, costume books, and maps. Printed illustration in early modern travel accounts frequently collided with visual conventions from cartographic models.<sup>5</sup> In regularly gridded areas that spilled over into their margins, maps offered readymade formats for the visualisation of peoples encountered by travellers. This modular grid provided handy compartments for organising those peoples, recording both geographic and cultural difference, and incentivising variety. As such, cartographic space offered an important format for presenting costumes and customs.

Perhaps the most salient factor uniting the cartographic, travel, and costume literature printed in cosmopolitan centres was the tendency to express geographic difference by the anatomical shorthand of the bodies of peoples who lived there. Scholars have looked to map margins as a space for structuring incipient gender and proto-racial stereotypes because of the format they provided for the organisation of new knowledge. The modular space of the grid offered a spatial armature that transcended classical binaries used to define the Other, such as orthodox and heathen, civilised and barbaric, and pictured new ethnographic, racial, and gender relationships.<sup>6</sup> These formal displays of bodies incentivised methods of comparative analysis

<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 53–72, and plates 3–7.

<sup>5</sup> For more on cartography and travel, see Chapter 27 above.

<sup>6</sup> Valerie Traub, 'Mapping the Global Body', in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (eds.), *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 44–97 (p. 45).

that ultimately inspired relativistic thinking about extra-European peoples, overturning older paradigms founded on stark differences.<sup>7</sup>

A multi-block woodcut that circulated in southern Germany around 1508 used a grid format to map the journey of the merchant Balthasar Springer to Southeast Asia.<sup>8</sup> The Augsburg artist Hans Burgkmair distilled this merchant's journey into a series of encounters with West Africans, indigenous peoples of the Cape region, peoples of Mozambique, and India, all separated into discrete compartments. Images designed for this account established a tenacious visual standard for eyewitness credibility: anatomical rendering filtered through Renaissance models, close attention to ethnographic detail, and presentation of peoples in compartments of shallow depth.<sup>9</sup> Together, these qualities conspired to support reportorial authenticity. The authority established by Burgkmair's visual comparisons spawned numerous copies, but these copies complicated the careful ethnographic distinctions that he noted and parsed. The path of some of Burgkmair's motifs has been traced to Seville, for example, where they likely became the model for the title-page woodcut of the first published account of the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire in Bartolomé Pérez's *Verdadera relación de la conquista del Perú* (Seville, 1534), as well as serving as inspiration for other accounts of the conquest of Peru billed as travel literature, such as de Bry's edition of Girolamo Benzoni.<sup>10</sup>

Printed images were peripatetic; they wandered amongst diverse genres where their components were transposed or reappropriated. New blocks of Burgkmair's prints of Africans and Indians were generated in Antwerp where they were published in the border of a broadsheet, *De novo mondo*, in 1520 (Figure 29.1). Although marketed by the printer Jan van Doesborch as an account of Amerigo Vespucci's travels to the Americas, after only a brief summary of Vespucci's voyage, it segued into a transcript of an unrelated merchant heading to India.<sup>11</sup> The 'novo mondo' of the title seems retroactively fitting for a report

<sup>7</sup> Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 70–132; Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography*, pp. 78–86.

<sup>8</sup> Balthasar Springer et al., *The Voyage from Lisbon to India, 1505–6: Being an Account and Journal* (London: B. F. Stevens, 1894); Balthasar Springer, *Balthasar Springers Indienfahrt 1505/06*, ed. Franz Schulze (Strassburg: Heitz & Mündel, 1902).

<sup>9</sup> Stephanie Leitch, 'Burgkmair's "Peoples of Africa and India" (1508) and the Origins of Ethnography in Print', *Art Bulletin*, 91/2 (2009), 134–59.

<sup>10</sup> See Tom Cummins, 'The Indulgent Image', in Ilona Katzew et al. (eds.), *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), pp. 203–26 (at p. 217).

<sup>11</sup> Balthasar Springer and Amerigo Vespucci, *De novo mondo ...* (Antwerp: Jan van Doesborch, 1520); Amerigo Vespucci et al., *De novo mondo, Antwerp, Jan van Doesborch (About 1520). A facsimile of an unique broadsheet containing an early account of the inhabitants*



Figure 29.1 Anon. in Balthasar Springer and Amerigo Vespucci, *De novo mundo* . . . (Antwerp: Doesborch, 1520), woodcut broadsheet, Rostock UB Qi-39. Courtesy of Universitaetsbibliothek Rostock.

announcing the mixed jumble of many extra-Europeans new to European consciousness. The document's organising formula of the grid was invoked mostly to categorise peoples in cosmopolitan centres where news of the inhabitants of the Americas, Africa, and India was rapidly colliding. Doesborch's decision to group together peoples of geographically distinct origins has disturbed modern commentators but is unlikely to have bothered sixteenth-century readers for whom this must have served as a crib sheet for categorising peoples in an increasingly connected world.

Although the Antwerp 'Vespucci' broadsheet would have left readers puzzled about the author's actual trajectory, the confused illustrations accompanying it suggest that the early modern appetite for pictures of exotic peoples surpassed the need for carefully reported geographic material, privileging mostly the representations of those encounters. Substituting the iconography of native Americans for indigenous peoples of other geographic regions bred a confusion that often marked early modern recounting of travel. Ethnographic specificity was readily sacrificed in favour of expediency; recycled images usually served the printer's bottom line and produced a rich base of stock images. The widely travelled depiction of the Brazilian Tupinambá in a feather skirt, for example, began as a printer's attempt at ethnographic detail, but the motif was quickly appropriated to portray unfamiliar peoples from all over the globe.<sup>12</sup> Printers were often thus complicit in such confusions – the interchangeability of motifs kept the idea of the exotic alive and well.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, readers' emerging desire for specificity did produce some attempts to correct previous printers' infelicities. Early modern printers frequently traded accuracy for particularity; rejecting familiar stock images was a calculated risk ventured by only a few.<sup>14</sup>

Desire for diversity in a print market now flush with particular images invited the plunder of motifs from other printed sources – especially as wider adventure exposed travellers to more peoples and among whose customs they endeavoured to distinguish. Large-scale projects like the anthology of travels to the Americas and India (1580–1630) printed by Theodor de Bry;

*of South America, together with a short version of Heinrich Sprenger's Voyage to the Indies*, ed. M. E. Kronenberg (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1927); Amerigo Vespucci, *Van der nieuwer werelt oft landschap* ([Antwerp: Jan van Doesborch], 1506).

<sup>12</sup> See William Sturtevant, 'La tupinambisation des Indiens de l'Amérique du Nord', in Gilles Thérien (ed.), *Figures de l'Indien* (Montreal: University of Quebec, 1988), pp. 293–303. Christian F. Feest, *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 610.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Mason, *Infelicities: Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 1–42.

<sup>14</sup> Lisa Voigt and Elio Brancaforte, 'The Traveling Illustrations of Sixteenth-Century Travel Narratives', *PMLA*, 129/3 (2014), 365–98 (at pp. 388ff.).

Albrecht Herport's travels to India c.1669; and Johan Nieuhof's peregrinations with the Dutch East India company (VOC) to China required novel depictions simply to distinguish amongst peoples encountered. The need to order diverse groups of peoples found rich potential in the grid format for its ability to juxtapose and organise customs. Borders of later wall maps reprised such groupings to differentiate peoples of an increasingly diverse variety.<sup>15</sup> This formal development would also underwrite nineteenth-century methods of comparativism in travel images specifically designed to organise the results of anthropological inquiry.<sup>16</sup>

### Travel Collections

One of the earliest popularisers of travel accounts was the Protestant printer and entrepreneur Theodor de Bry, who reprised a tradition begun by Fracanzano da Montalboddo's early travel anthology *Paesi novamente ritrovati* (Vicenza, 1507). Twenty-eight volumes known today as the *Grands Voyages* were printed serially in Frankfurt by the de Bry family press between 1590 and 1628.<sup>17</sup> The novelty of de Bry's approach depended on systematic illustration. These volumes, organised by hemispheres into *India Orientalis* and *America, or India Occidentalis*, essentially reprinted existing accounts, many of conquest, but added copious images.<sup>18</sup> De Bry's overhaul of already circulating reports involved synthesising their content of travel and conquest, directing new emphasis towards the display of customs. Delivering illustrated travel literature with a polemical bent, he focused the books' visual programmes around bodies as sites of cross-cultural encounter and conflict. De Bry's reasons for depicting both European and extra-European bodies stereotypically were practical ones: he himself had little first-hand experience with travel, he relied in part on illustrations cribbed from other accounts, and his training as an engraver exposed him to Renaissance modelling and anatomical standards. De Bry's systematic programme of illustration made these stereotypes recognisable through repeated printings, and as such they became well suited to polemic.

De Bry's 1596 reprint of Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del nuovo mundo* (Venice, 1565), for example, jettisoned the author's original illustrations that

<sup>15</sup> Traub, 'Mapping the Global Body', p. 49 and n.16.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion, 2011), pp. 26–9.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Greve, *Die Konstruktion Amerikas: Bilderpolitik in den Grands Voyages aus der Werkstatt de Bry* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), pp. 51ff.

<sup>18</sup> Michiel van Groesen, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages (1590–1634)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 389 ff.

documented the local customs of peoples of the Caribbean, Central America, and Peru in favour of sensationalised images of Spanish aggressors and indigenous victims.<sup>19</sup> Sacrificing Benzoni's ethnographic information, de Bry instead concentrated his efforts on an ideological programme denouncing Catholic abuses in the New World.<sup>20</sup> Spaniards and native populations were delivered as broad caricatures against an imagined backdrop of local customs. This produced some fantastical images, such as the improbable attempt at defence pictured in fol. 23 (Figure 29.2). However, de Bry attempted to bolster the truth of scenes by providing assurances from other authorities like Vasco Núñez de Balboa and Petrus de Cieca cited nearby in the text.

De Bry frequently couched his volumes' pseudo-ethnographic information in formulae popular from other genres, like adventure travel, costume books, and even manifestos. Because such diverse visual programmes informed early modern travel literature, it is perhaps more helpful to think fluidly about genres of representation not as hard and fast categories, but instead as ones defined by their mutual resemblances. The *Grands Voyages* is itself a collection of conquest narratives that were reified as 'travel accounts' once organised as such by de Bry's press. For example, Bartolomé de las Casas's apologia or manifesto, the *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, which was marketed by de Bry's press as *Narratio regionum Indicarum per Hispanos quosdam devastatarum verissima* (Frankfurt: Theodor de Bry, 1598), illuminates how the printer reconciled his primary sources to the convention of travel literature. Las Casas's diatribe against Spanish abuses included all the markings of a classic travel adventure: exotic location, sensationalised battles, and indigenous peoples disturbed in the midst of peaceful local practices. De Bry's inclusion of imagery familiar from his more classical travel volumes, as well as the standardised look honed by his serialised marketing campaign, linked such polemic to travel literature in general. The visual expectations that de Bry both created and fed ushered diverse types of account into the fold of travel literature.

<sup>19</sup> Girolamo Benzoni, *Americae pars sexta, siue, historiae ab Hieronymo Bēzono mediolanēse scriptae, sectio tertia* . . . (Frankfurt: Theodor de Bry, 1596).

<sup>20</sup> See Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Ethnographer's Sketch, Sensational Engraving, Full-length Portrait: Print Genres for Spanish America in Girolamo Benzoni, the De Brys, and Cesare Vecellio', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 41/1 (2011), 137–71 (esp. pp. 141ff.).



Die Spanier streitten mit den Indianern/welche ihre Wohnung auff  
den Bäumen haben.



**D**ie Indianer welche an der selbigen Meridionalischen grenzen oder an dem Meer welches gegen dem stillen Meer über ist sich halten pflegen ihre wohnung oben auff die Bäume zu bauen denn der Boden dafelbst ist ganz sumppfig vnd moertricht/ Derhalben dann die Spanier diese Wölcker biß daher nicht haben bezwingen können dienen sie mit den Wölcken ihren nicht zusammentzen mögen. Valboas ist der erst gewesen welcher als er an daffelbige Meridionalisch Meer kam/diese Leute auff den Bäumen ersehen hat / welches fürwar ihm vnd seinen Spanischen Knechten die er bey sich hatte ganz lächerlich für kam. Denn es gar was newes/also daß sie anfangs anders nicht vermeteten / als ob die Störcke oder Ägeln ihre Nester dohin auff die Bäume gemacht hetten. Diese selbige Bäume waren so hoch daß ein starker Mann sie kaum mit einem Stein überwerffen möchte. Ja es sein drey ein theil so viel daß sie acht Personen nicht vmbkloffen können. Gleicher art wohnungen findet man noch mehr / an etlichen andern feuchten wasserichten Orten desselbigen lands. Die Leuth so darinnen wohnen/sind streubar vnd reich an Gold vnd Silber/sie haben ihre land vor den Spaniern jederzeit beschützt. Auch deren das meiste theil erschlagen. Dieser Heuler gedencet auch Petrus de Citea in seinem ersten Theil der Peruanschen Chronica am zwölfften/am sechß vnd zwanzigsten vnd am neun vnd zwanzigsten Capitel/vnd schreibt sie seyen inwendig so weitschiffig vnd räumig daß sich wol etliche Hausgeßellen darinnen auffhalten können.

Die

Figure 29.2 Theodor de Bry and Girolamo Benzoni, *Americae pars sexta, sive, historiae ab Hieronymo Bēzono scripta, sectio tertia . . .* (1596). Courtesy of Strozier Library Special Collections, FSU.

Although images of Amerindians in de Bry's account frequently traded on stereotypes of the noble savage, they were significant for the extent to which this alterity was particularised. Depictions of indigenous peoples appearing in this series have sometimes been called proto-ethnographic by virtue of their compliance with European norms of anatomy and their copious descriptions of local customs. In fact, de Bry's bodies of indigenous Americans and Southeast Asians were conventional, and in some cases actually modelled on classical sculpture filtered through Flemish Mannerist printmakers such as Hendrick Goltzius, Jan van der Straet (called Stradanus), and Maarten van Heemskerck.<sup>21</sup> With the depiction of anatomies rigidly governed by familiar artistic norms, de Bry strategically reserved the spotlight for the display of habits and customs.

It is also important to consider the debt that travel images owed to formal printing conventions, including layout.<sup>22</sup> While woodcuts in early travel publications were easily embedded into pages set with moveable type, de Bry's engravings on copper plates were printed separately and thus led to new arrangements of text and image. Some of the images in de Bry's travel narratives were bundled like an appendix at the end of long unillustrated passages. As a result, images further removed from their textual references invited more profuse and explanatory captions. Later volumes attempted to reintegrate the text and visual material on the same page where readers could more easily cross-reference text and images.

### Anthologising Habits

Capitalising on audiences newly sensitised to foreign bodies through costume books, de Bry's volumes followed templates active in this popular genre. Travel narratives cross-pollinated with contemporary books of clothing and habits with which they sustained a rich symbiotic relationship. The profusion of contemporary books that anthologised the habits and clothing of the peoples of the world made costumes popular content for later travel literature.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Keazor, 'Theodore de Bry's Images for America', *Print Quarterly*, 15/2 (1998), 131–49 (esp. pp. 135ff.).

<sup>22</sup> Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. 1–43.

De Bry poached some of the figures used in his edition of Girolamo Benzoni's account from a manuscript *Trachtenbuch* in which the artist Christopher Weiditz recorded peoples encountered on a journey to the court of Charles V.<sup>23</sup> The reappropriation of dress from Weiditz's manuscript offers an excellent example of how costume literature was plundered as authoritative sources for travel literature, frequently at the expense of geographic precision. Weiditz's jugglers and ball players, presumably of Aztec origin, were relocated to Cuzco in Theodor de Bry's reworking of Benzoni's account. The tenacity of motifs from costume illustrations in travel accounts is not surprising given that dress was often the most reliable method of articulating cultural differences in the amorphous borderlands of early modern geography.<sup>24</sup>

Printed costume books took off in earnest as a genre in the middle of the sixteenth century. Early volumes recording dress, such as François Despres's *Recueil de la diversité des habits* (Paris: Richard Breton, 1562), spawned a half century of publications about dress that reached an apogee in the Venetian costume books printed by Cesare Vecellio in the 1590s. The symbiosis of travel accounts and costume books makes a clear evolution difficult to articulate, but some repercussions of their synergy are explored by Peter Mason.<sup>25</sup> The views of peoples in Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (London, 1588) were not unlike ones to be found in costume books such as *Recueil de costumes étrangers* (J. J. Boissard, 1581) and Abraham de Bruyn's *Habitus variarum orbis gentium* (1581). Later, the second edition of Vecellio's costume book *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo*, published in 1598, pirated images from travel publications, such as that of an Algonquian woman carrying her child, after an engraving in de Bry's printing of Thomas Harriot's report of Virginia, itself based on a watercolour by John White.<sup>26</sup> Another Venetian costume book, Pietro Bertelli's *Diversarum nationum habitus* (Venice, 1594), cribbed the 'noble American woman' and the Inca leader Atahualpa straight from de Bruyn's *Omnium pene Europae, Asiae, Aphricae atque Americae gentium habitus* (Cologne and Antwerp, 1577, 1581).

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch* (c.1529), Germanische Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Hs. 22474.4.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *World in Venice*, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Mason, *The Lives of Images* (London: Reaktion, 2001), pp. 120ff.

<sup>26</sup> Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Clothing of the Renaissance World: Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas: Cesare Vecellio's Habiti antichi et moderni* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), p. 35.

The tangled genealogy of travel and costume images reinforced the authority associated with them. Viewers' repeated encounter with the same images in various genres spurred familiarity with recognisable and representative types. Recognition bolstered the credibility of the information presented there. Authenticity was also constructed through visual conventions such as positioning a viewer before the picture plane in order to simulate the role of the eyewitness.

Figures presented in shallow space and parallel to the picture plane were a shared formal hallmark of both costume and travel illustration. Illustrations of people found in editions of Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* (1594) exploit this strategy.<sup>27</sup> A Dutch explorer in the employ of a Portuguese archbishop in Goa, Linschoten later defected to Protestantism and served as a spy. His adventures were published by several different presses and circulated widely.<sup>28</sup> The first Dutch edition of the *Itinerario* featured engravings by Johan van Doetichum of regional maps, topographic panoramas, and many images of the local populations. Linschoten's itinerary stands out in the ethnographic literature for the sharp eye he trained on Indo-Portuguese society. The impartiality offered by this Dutch traveller in Portuguese India was perceived to bring a more objective perspective on indigenous populations.<sup>29</sup> Linschoten provided a foil to classical patterns of 'othering' by including images of Portuguese peoples and customs alongside those of the Goans; his identity as a Dutchman introduced a third party into the binary self/other formula.<sup>30</sup>

Images of indigenous Goans appearing in the *Navigatio* (1596) present peoples as types distinguished by their professions and customs (Figure 29.3). Classically positioned bodies, topographic description, and shallow placement of the figures helped promote the idea that the narrator's gaze was objective.<sup>31</sup> The caption accompanying the German-language reprint literally constructs the reader as an eyewitness:

<sup>27</sup> Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, voyage ofte schipvaert, van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (Amsterdam: Claesz, 1594).

<sup>28</sup> For a collection of digital editions of Linschoten's account, see Linschoten, 'Itinerario', [www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/China-Bibliographie/blog/2010/02/03/linschoten-itinerario](http://www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/China-Bibliographie/blog/2010/02/03/linschoten-itinerario).

<sup>29</sup> Rubiés, 'Travel Writing and Ethnography', p. 249.

<sup>30</sup> Marília dos Santos Lopes, *Wonderful Things Never Yet Seen: Iconography of the Discoveries*, trans. Clive Gilbert (Lisbon: Livros Quetzal, 1998), p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> See Dawn Odell, 'Creaturally Invented Letters and Dead Chinese Idols', in Michael Wayne Cole and Rebecca Zorach (eds.), *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 267–88 (at p. 274).



Figure 29.3 Images of Goans in Jan van Linschoten, *Navigatio ac itinerarium . . .* (1596). Courtesy of Herzog August Bibliothek.

Here is presented to your eyes an Indian *Balliadera*, or dancer, who is employed in public spectacles or celebrations for amusements. If someone desires her for other purposes, she accommodates these for a paltry sum. After this is pictured a soldier from Balagate, called *Lascarim*, who wears nothing except around the head and about the groin and holds a drawn weapon in his hand. In the last instance, we see a farmer called *Canaryn* with his wife and children, who also go about naked with the exception of a cloth around their genitals . . . they subsist on the cultivation of palms.<sup>32</sup>

The idea that images in travel accounts presented some kind of reality *to the eyes* was frequently articulated in accompanying texts. Even as Linschoten’s transcript circulated clichés about sex-workers and exotic practices such as

<sup>32</sup> My translation. Jan Huygen van Linschoten et. al., *Ander Theil der Orientalischen Indien* (Frankfurt: Saur, 1598), xiii.

suttee, the credibility of the narrator was reinforced by pictorial warrants: the captions addressed the reader as an accomplice who should verify the textual data in the images themselves.

### Eyewitnessing

Assurances of the 'eyewitness' had credited travel accounts for as long as they had been produced, but these arose with increasing urgency in texts whose images sought to confirm knowledge gained empirically. The fiction of first-hand viewing or 'autopsy' was employed by Pliny, St Augustine, and Isidore of Seville who invoked this rhetorical stance to enhance their credibility. Anthony Pagden and others have rehearsed the importance of testimonies of first-hand experience as critical to the making of colonial relations.<sup>33</sup> But the text's claims were also supported by the paratextual apparatus in which accompanying images performed their own accrediting work. Recycled images did surprisingly little to dilute textual claims to first-hand experience; paradoxically, they might have even assisted the project of credibility by making these types familiar to a wider readership.

In seventeenth-century travel images, eyewitness claims were made credible through descriptive naturalism and perspectival adjustments that situated the viewer in the narrator's position. Subject matter shifted away from representations of extra-European bodies to depictions of foreign customs. Images emerging in the context of the peregrinations of Dutch merchants of the VOC and Jesuit missionaries in Asia reflected new subjects of interest to newsmakers and encyclopedists. Views that we see in those itineraries appear strategically cropped to posit the reader as a first-hand observer. The careful tooling of this point of view unites the variety of images collected in these volumes, as well as their diverse functions, ranging from didactic to narrative and overtly propagandistic.<sup>34</sup> These prospects shifted seamlessly among architectural environments including houses of worship, representations of religious practices, and even artifacts themselves, as in the case of Olfert Dapper's *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye* (Amsterdam, 1670). Attention was frequently drawn to the trustworthiness of

<sup>33</sup> See Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 50ff.; François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: the Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 249.

<sup>34</sup> Odell, 'Creaturally Invented Letters', p. 284.

the accompanying illustrations. The subtitle of Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* (Amsterdam: van Meurs, 1665), an account of the VOC's activity in China, boasts that the engravings would provide 'an accurate description of Chinese cities, villages, government . . . sciences, crafts, manners, religions'.<sup>35</sup> The homogeneous visual programme engineered by Nieuhof's publisher Jacob van Meurs has been characterised as commercial branding that abetted the authority of the narratives.<sup>36</sup> Pictorial strategies that emerged in publications of Jesuits sought transparently to transmit knowledge collected by missionaries.<sup>37</sup> Athanasius Kircher's compendium of idolatry in China, or Joseph Francis Lafitau's comparative history of the customs of North American indigenous tribes and those of ancient Europeans, for example, began to include pictorial collections of objects in encyclopedic displays, partly in response to the expanding proto-scientific functions of these genres.<sup>38</sup>

The trope of eyewitnessing both justified and certified many Enlightenment scientific pursuits as first-hand testimony began to supplant the reliability of book learning. It is easy to forget that dangerous travel lurked behind the benign and beautiful pictures that returned from the voyages of discovery and ultimately became their goal. To images of peoples, comparative customs, habits, architecture, landscape, colonial travellers added an emphasis on picturing natural history. The visualisation of objective scrutiny that would come to set the standard for picturing Enlightenment science depended on the fiction of an embodied and vigilant empiricist.<sup>39</sup> This point of view was already familiar to audiences from travel publications.

Naturalists sent to New Spain and South America carried over older visual paradigms for portraying nature, but these came into scientific focus in the eighteenth century: a diagnostic and taxonomic mode of picturing that isolated natural specimens from their local surroundings, opening them up, as Daniela Bleichmar has suggested, for a more global consideration.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Siegfried Huigen et al., *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 135.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 27ff.

<sup>37</sup> Odell, 'Creaturally Invented Letters', p. 286.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Francis Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages américains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (Paris: Chez Saugrain l'aîné, 1724).

<sup>39</sup> For modes of picturing and their relationship to objectivity, see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone, 2007), pp. 191ff.

<sup>40</sup> Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 157.

Minutely described insects and plants in dramatic close-ups appeared in the engravings of Maria Sybilla Merian's *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* (Amsterdam, 1705); these were the concretisation of observations made during her travel expeditions to Surinam. The scientific activity of fact-finding missions can be identified and tracked in the images they returned. Alejandro Malaspina (1789–94), Antoine de Bougainville (1766–9), and James Cook (1768–71) all procured naturalists to accompany their journeys, certainly in part to meet the expectation that pictorial records were required of such voyages. Images in Alexander von Humboldt's *Plantes équinoxiales* (Paris, 1808–17), part of the larger account *Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland aux régions équinoxiales*, were modelled on the visual epistemology familiar from travel literature. The images in these accounts in turn helped fashion new fields of empirical investigation. Humboldt's pursuit of nature in the Amazon shaped a field of knowledge that eliminated evidence of native populations from the illustration in order to construct a clean slate for investigative pursuits of the scientific Enlightenment.<sup>41</sup>

Even across technologies in the *longue durée* of travel writing, the idea that illustrations could provide visual guarantees persisted. Photography, invented around 1830, became the technology par excellence to reassert eyewitness claims that had been the cornerstone of travel narratives in both textual and visual iterations. Photography could perhaps best advocate for the veracity of the subject without the intervention of the observer. Because of the perceived transparency of the medium, French and British artists in the wake of its popularisation undertook journeys to the Middle East specifically to produce photographs.<sup>42</sup> Francis Frith's photographic journey *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described* (London, 1858), for example, marked an important monument in the early development of documentary photography.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the first book to employ photographs as illustrations per se was a travel publication, Maxime du Camp's *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie: dessins photographiques recueillis pendant les années 1849, 1850 et 1854 . . .* (Paris, 1852). Publications such as these show how travel-related content inflected the development of the new medium of photography.

<sup>41</sup> Neil L. Whitehead, 'South America / Amazonia: The Forest of Marvels', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 122–38.

<sup>42</sup> Nancy Micklewright, *A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*



Travel photography enjoyed official state sponsorship in diplomatic envoys sent to document foreign regions. The French Ministry of Public Instruction, for instance, commissioned Auguste Salzmänn to document Jewish, Islamic, and Christian architecture in Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup> This photographic mission was backed by the camera's association with objectivity and confidence in the legibility of those truths in the image.<sup>45</sup> The difficulty of stabilising subjects explains in part the emphasis on the architectural monuments and the empty city-views that proliferated in this volume as the camera's lens sought the stillness offered by immobile subjects. But this absence of the human element in the photographic productions of travel during the Second Empire presented the illusion of an uninhabited landscape that would later motivate imperial expansion.<sup>46</sup> Like the genre of travel, the history of photography is also bound up with the discourses of science, geographic expansion, imperialism, archaeology, and techniques of reproduction.<sup>47</sup> While initially embraced for the perceived detachment of the technology from its subjects, photography later became problematic in investigations of colonial anthropology, where it accompanied anxieties about the disappearance of the subject, the effectiveness of the grid as a background for staging anthropological and cultural comparisons, and even the nature of knowledge.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

Travel illustrations provide a sharp lens through which to view the emergence of early modern epistemological approaches to understanding the world, its peoples, ideas of otherness, cultural exchange, and geography. While it is productive to consider the content that predominated in illustrations of particular regions at particular times – such as monsters in the Far East, peoples in India and the Americas, religion in China, peoples and hunting in Africa, and nature in the Amazon, for example – this content provides only a partial picture. Historians of visual culture also need to

<sup>44</sup> Auguste Salzmänn, *Jérusalem: étude et reproduction photographique des monuments de la Ville Sainte, depuis l'époque Judäique jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Gide et J. Baudry, 1856).

<sup>45</sup> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 155.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, pp. 17ff. See also Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

consider the visual apparatus of the book, ideas about the originality of the image, the epistemology of the copy, as well as the commercial and ideological incentives for providing illustrations. Early modern travel writing in particular encompassed a wide array of visual material over which no one genre had exclusive rights. Any analysis of images appearing in the range of genres considered travel-related literature must also examine critically the rhetorical, visual, and epistemological claims of these respective media.