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Gábor Gelléri, *Lessons of Travel in Eighteenth-Century France: From Grand Tour to School Trips*. Woodbridge, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 2020. ix + 235 pp. Notes, bibliography, and index. £75.00 U.K./\$130.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9781783274369; £19.00 U.K./\$24.99 U.S. (eb). ISBN 9781787445772.

Review by Julia Landweber, Montclair State University.

Reading a history of ideas about travel in the winter of 2021 feels almost dreamlike. As I write this, the United States is marking the one-year anniversary of shutdown due to a global pandemic that has halted nearly all but the most local or essential travel. Thankfully, vaccines are becoming increasingly available, but still no one knows when anything approaching “normal” kinds of travel—especially the sort of trips intended to broaden the minds of young people, such as school trips or study-abroad adventures—will resume. Americans especially are in a bind, as for the past year most countries around the world placed severe restrictions on admitting U.S. passport holders. A fresh history of beliefs concerning the traveler’s ability to escape parochialism is timelier now than ever before. I doubt even Gábor Gelléri could have envisioned his project being this relevant when he embarked on it.

The book’s title, *Lessons of Travel in Eighteenth-Century France: From Grand Tour to School Trips*, is simultaneously misleading and entirely accurate. Anyone who picks up this text expecting a history of early modern French travelers and the lessons they gained from their travels, or even a history that tracks the evolution of educational travel (“from Grand Tour to school trips,” as the subtitle has it) may not find this book tremendously satisfying. Very few actual travelers make an appearance here, and when they do, the emphasis is not on their experiences away from home. Nonetheless, “lessons of travel” are precisely Gelléri’s focus. For him this phrase applies to something more philosophical than practical, to “a long-established genre of advice literature: *ars apodemica*,” meaning “arts of travel” or more precisely, “the art of being abroad” (pp. 1-2). Is travel abroad a good idea or a bad idea? Is there a correct way to do it? Who should engage in it? Who should *not* engage in it? Questions like these intrigued numerous early modern European thinkers concerned to codify best travel practices in writing. Gelléri calls all such pieces of writing (some stand-alone dissertations and treatises, others salted into works on different subjects; some canonical, others virtually unknown today) “apodemetic texts,” to distinguish them as a special corpus within the broader realm of travel literature. As a genre, *ars apodemica* can be traced back at least to classical antiquity in southern Europe, and also appears in early Chinese and medieval Islamic literatures. However, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France a particular efflorescence of vernacular apodemetic texts took off. Explaining its appearance and resonance for French audiences is the purpose of this book.

The book is divided into six thematic chapters ordered with a gentle nod toward chronology. After touring the reader through the concept and history of *ars apodemica* writings in the introduction, chapters one and two examine contemporary views of the two forms of voluntary travel upon which early modern male aristocrats most often embarked: the Grand Tour and diplomatic missions. Chapters three and four take a more philosophical line, focusing on Abbé Pluche's midcentury pedagogical best-seller, *Le Spectacle de la Nature*, and on Rousseau's even more successful novel *Émile*, both of which contain lengthy ruminations on the merits of travel within an educational context. Chapter five analyzes two academic prize contests: the 1763-64 Marseille contest, and the 1785-87 Lyon contest, both of which asked whether travel for educational purposes was useful and worthwhile. Lastly, chapter six considers some early attempts at inventing the school trip, through an examination of two Revolutionary-era efforts at developing programs of collective educational travel.

Gelléri argues that the many authors of the apodemic texts he has assembled here were united in their "call for a 'different' form of travel" which was, moreover, "the *raison d'être* of this corpus" (p. 202). They agreed in theory that personal exposure to other cultures was a good thing, but they also concurred in thinking the traditional Grand Tour was inadequate to achieving that goal. Would it be enough to reform the way young men of the aristocracy experienced the Grand Tour? Should pedagogical travel be eliminated entirely, or opened up to non-elites or even to women, or handed over to school teachers who knew best how to design truly educational group trips for their young charges? Chapter by chapter, Gelléri examines a series of differing perspectives on these questions. The one quality the texts—and their conclusions—have in common is their nature as "theoretical and rhetorical exercises, but with an orientation toward practical application" (p. 140). However, the attention to actual practices of travel, weak to begin with in this tradition, could not compete after the middle of the eighteenth century with the rise of popular new works which chose instead to address travel more as a theoretical lens for other topics than for itself. As such, *Ars apodemica* perfectly suited the growing French Enlightenment preference for thought experiments over practicalities. In sum, "an *apodemica* is a discussion of whether one should travel, and how to make travel beneficial; practical details feature only as secondary considerations" (p. 205). It was a genre suited to raising all sorts of thorny social questions, such as whether young women could benefit, as men were assumed to, from travel; the possible educational role of the rising merchant class as possessors of practical knowledge, in relation to the nobility whose sons could benefit from such knowledge; and ultimately whether a Revolutionary citizenry should incorporate travel in their children's educational development—the ultimate democratic vision of school trips for all. What it was not was practical. By the end of the century, this genre had essentially abandoned even the idea of educational travel for any but the "cream of the nation" (p. 200).

Despite its potential resonance for today's grounded travelers, *Lessons of Travel in Eighteenth-Century France* is not for the casual reader (or even the casual scholar) interested in histories of travel or mobility. Written in a highly erudite style and liberally decorated with academic vocabulary, Gelléri is writing for a distinctly specialist audience. In this he succeeds admirably, offering both a valuable contribution to the history of ideas, and a welcome contribution to the literary field of *ars apodemica* genre analysis.

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