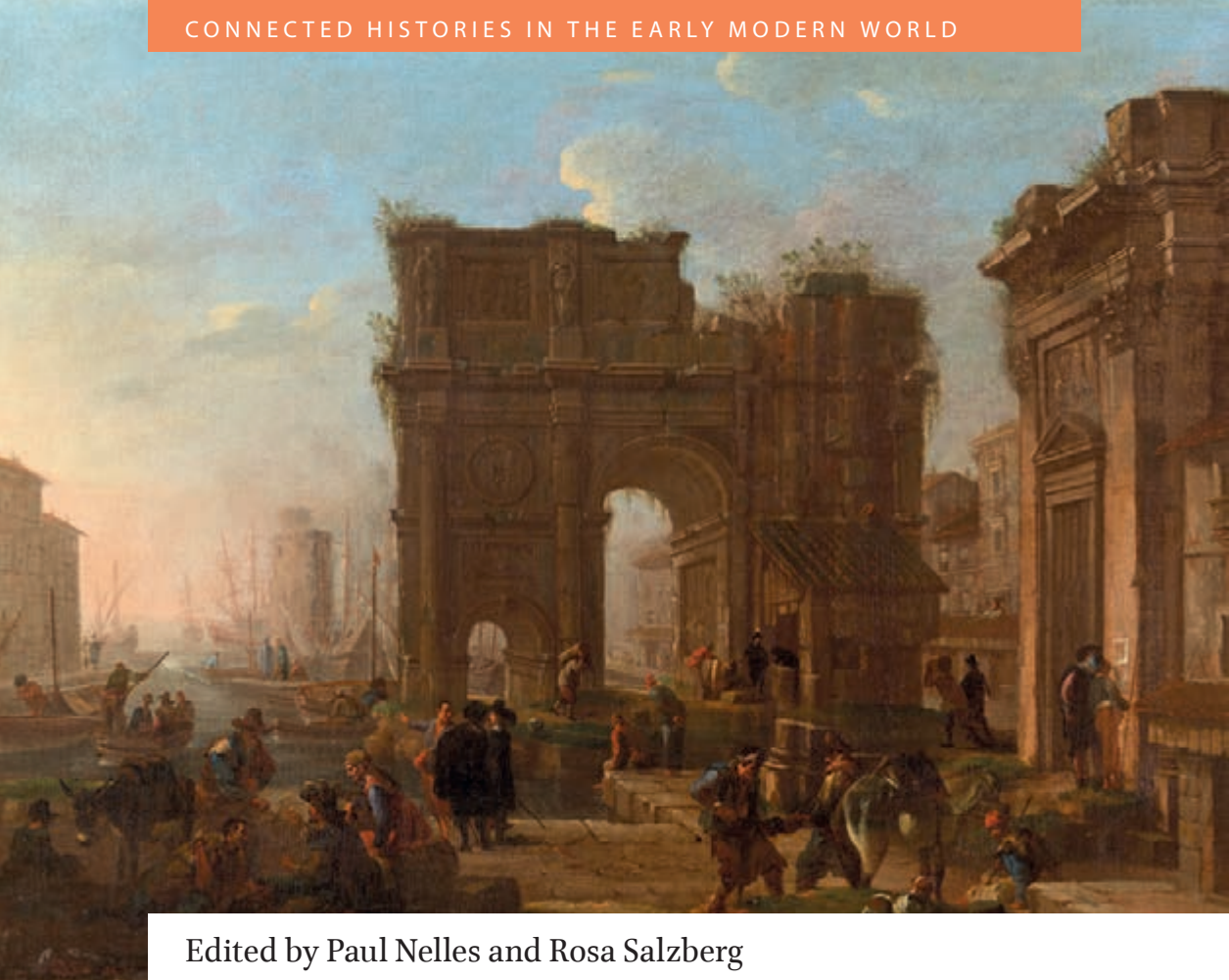


CONNECTED HISTORIES IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD



Edited by Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg

Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World

The Practice and Experience
of Movement

Amsterdam
University
Press

Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World

Connected Histories in the Early Modern World

Connected Histories in the Early Modern World contributes to our growing understanding of the connectedness of the world during a period in history when an unprecedented number of people—Africans, Asians, Americans, and Europeans—made transoceanic or other long distance journeys. Inspired by Sanjay Subrahmanyam's innovative approach to early modern historical scholarship, it explores topics that highlight the cultural impact of the movement of people, animals, and objects at a global scale. The series editors welcome proposals for monographs and collections of essays in English from literary critics, art historians, and cultural historians that address the changes and cross-fertilizations of cultural practices of specific societies. General topics may concern, among other possibilities: cultural confluences, objects in motion, appropriations of material cultures, cross-cultural exoticization, transcultural identities, religious practices, translations and mistranslations, cultural impacts of trade, discourses of dislocation, globalism in literary/visual arts, and cultural histories of lesser studied regions (such as the Philippines, Macau, African societies).

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Movement and Mobility in the Early Modern World: An Introduction

Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg

Abstract

The Introduction offers an orientation to mobility themes emerging from the social sciences and considers how they can generate new understandings of the early modern world. It calls for integrating the study of different forms of mobility – embodied, local, global – and highlights the need to pay attention to the ‘quotidian mechanics’ of movement at all scales. It is structured around three themes: moving bodies; crossing borders; and networks, distance, and circulation.

Keywords: circulation; trade; travel writing; global history; communication; transport

From around 1450, Europe became more mobile and more connected – both internally and to the wider world – than ever before. The enhancement of transport and communication systems (road and river networks, the printing press, postal services); the growth of cities; the spread of “Renaissance” culture; the global expansion of trade, Christianity, and empires; and the ever-increasing movement of people and goods stimulated encounters and exchanges, conversions and conflicts.¹ At the same time, the growth and acceleration of mobility spurred the development of policies and infrastructures that aimed to regulate and channel movement. In the words of Martin and Bleichmar, “the early modern period was uniquely liminal in so far as it opened up new horizons of movement and possibility, while

¹ For useful overviews of these developments, see Moch, *Moving Europeans*; Canny, *Europeans on the Move*; Lucassen and Lucassen, “Mobility Transition;” Ehmer, “Quantifying Mobility;” Scott, “Travel and Communications;” Behringer, “Communications Revolutions.”

simultaneously prompting the desire to establish boundaries, to demarcate and dominate.”² The intersection and creative tension between these crosscurrents fundamentally shaped the lives, itineraries, and experiences of mobile individuals. They also left lasting traces on many other aspects of early modern life: on settled communities, on urban and rural landscapes, and on patterns of cultural formation.

Our own age of hyper-mobility and instant connection – but also of pandemic lockdowns and escalating climate and refugee crises – is making us more sensitive to these complex and ambivalent dynamics in the past. Yet it is crucial to be aware not just of continuities between our day and the past but also of fundamental differences in the actual practice and experience of movement. As such, more attention can be given to what we might call the “quotidian mechanics” of early modern mobility: the material and physical experiences together with the systems, technologies, and practices that facilitated and impeded movement, whether on a local or a global scale. As Stephen Greenblatt has emphasized, mobility must first be studied in a highly literal sense, and these practical aspects need to be seen as “indispensable keys to understanding the fate of cultures.”³ In other words, to better understand the impact of mobility and what it meant to people at the time, we need to know more about what movement felt like and how mobility *worked* (or did not), in a very concrete sense.

Work carried out under the rubric of the “new mobilities paradigm” in a spate of recent social science research – particularly in sociology and human geography – offers useful models for approaching the study of early modern mobility.⁴ This body of scholarship insists on an understanding of movement as an integral part of human societies: as the norm rather than the exception. It draws our attention to practices of mobility and to their impact, and to the spaces that mobility creates: spaces of movement but also of waiting or stillness (airports or car interiors, for example, in our own day; ferry stations, ships, or inns in the early modern period). While this approach is becoming central to scholarship in the humanities, only recently has research begun to apply a mobilities framework to pre-modern societies.⁵

2 Bleichmar and Martin, “Introduction: Objects in Motion,” 618.

3 Greenblatt, “Mobility Studies Manifesto,” 250.

4 For an introduction, see Urry, *Mobilities*; Adey et al., *Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*.

5 On contributions made by arts and humanities scholars to the development of the mobilities paradigm, see Merriman and Pearce, eds., “Mobility and the Humanities.” See also the newly created Centre for Mobility & Humanities at the University of Padua (<https://www.mobilityand-humanities.it/>). Scholars of ancient and medieval Europe have engaged more extensively with the concept of mobility. See, for example, Moatti and Kaiser, eds., *Genes de passage*; Laurence and



Scholars of early modern mobilities of course cannot make use of many of the tools and methodologies of those researching the contemporary world, such as interviewing migrants or digitally tracking people as they move around cities.⁶ At the same time, we are able to work with a range of sources much more extensive than the “residues of movement” (wheel ruts, inscriptions, and so on) from which scholars of antiquity have nonetheless been able to skilfully unearth patterns of mobility in the more distant past.⁷ The increased scale and variety of early modern mobility generated a vast field of evidence, some of it well-used (such as travel diaries and guidebooks) but much only just beginning to be mined for this purpose: Inquisition trials and account books, architectural and visual sources, letters, plays, and novels, and material culture. Scholars are also starting to explore the possibilities for using digital tools to map the mobilities of people and things, as well as the infrastructure that supported this movement, in illuminating new ways.⁸ Investigation of this source material is producing an increasingly rich and multi-perspectival view of early modern mobility. Even so, certain corners remain difficult to access. The individual experiences of forced migrants such as slaves, refugees, or convicts, for example, have left few traces in the historical record. Similarly, locating the sensory and emotional responses to movement requires careful methodological handling.

This book contributes to a growing body of scholarship that challenges dominant notions of the “fixed” nature of pre-modern peoples and societies haplessly locked in place, in which mobility is habitually considered an exception.⁹ The volume draws together recent work by a group of international scholars using a range of sources and approaches to examine the practical, material, and social aspects of moving around Europe and the wider world in the early modern centuries. Stimulated by a mobilities approach, the chapters in this volume provide new ways of thinking about the early modern period by putting the concept of mobility – the movement

Newsome, eds., *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii*; Preiser-Kapeller, Reinfandt and Stouraitis, eds., *Migration Histories*.

6 For an overview of such methodologies, see Urry, *Mobilities*, chap. 2.

7 Newsome, “Making Movement Meaningful;” Leary, “Past Mobilities.”

8 Interesting examples include the Mapping the Republic of Letters Project (<http://republicofletters.stanford.edu>); the Fifteenth-Century Book Trade project (<http://15cbooktrade.ox.ac.uk>); the Hidden Cities apps which reconstruct micro-itineraries of urban mobility in the early modern period (<https://www.hiddencities.eu/>); the *Viae Regiae* map of English and Welsh roads (<https://viaeregiae.org/>); and the *Viabundus* pre-modern street map (<https://www.landesgeschichte.uni-goettingen.de/handelsstrassen/index.php>).

9 For an overview, see Sheller and Urry, “The New Mobilities Paradigm.”



of people and things through space and across distance – at the centre of the frame of enquiry.

Connected mobilities

While the chapters in this volume adopt a variety of disciplinary perspectives, geographical scales, and thematic orientation, collectively they highlight the fundamental importance of mobility to the inter-connected economic, social, political, and cultural life of the early modern world. They suggest that adopting a more mobile perspective can provide fresh viewpoints, shifting attention away from the major centres or paradigmatic individuals that have been the traditional focus of scholarship. The chapters illuminate the connected paths of people and things in motion, the spaces they passed through, and the kinds of encounters and exchanges that mobility engendered.

This introduction surveys some of the emerging trends in the study of early modern mobility in order to set the stage for the chapters that follow. It also points towards areas that deserve further attention. One of our central tasks is to delineate the varying scales and plural modalities of pre-modern mobility. At the same time, we wish to draw attention to the ways in which differing scales of mobility – embodied movement, regional itinerancy, or global transit, for example – were enmeshed. If, as has recently been suggested, there has been a tendency to fetishize mobility in contemporary scholarship, at the same time many of the individuated practices, documents, objects, and social processes implicated in early modern mobility – the mechanics of mobility writ small – have remained on the sidelines of historical inquiry.¹⁰

In the current state of scholarship there is an overwhelming tendency to equate mobility with either straightforward geographic dislocation and migration (movement from A to B) or, somewhat more subtly, with forms of cross-cultural encounter (mobility as representation or negotiated identity). Both trajectories of inquiry habitually carry an implicit assumption that larger distances somehow involve “greater” mobility, though without fully articulating by what measure such determinations might be made. While points of departure and arrival are coming into sharper focus in contemporary studies, the entire “meshwork” of what lies in between – the

10 Conrad, *What is Global History?*; Ghobrial, “Moving Stories,” 246.



interwoven pathways, routes, and networks along which things and people actually moved – remain rather fuzzy.¹¹

Even if new forms of global mobility are one of the distinctive features of the early modern world, these too need to be studied locally, “in place,” even when that place was itself in motion (a coach or ship) or a site of movement or transit (a road, a city gate, a customs house). Though no doubt “everything is mobile” on some scale, as some students of mobility have argued, it is also true that mobility is enacted within confined places and across bounded spaces.¹²

Physical movement is but a single component of mobility. The notion of “constellations of mobility” explored by Tim Cresswell is helpful in thinking about the inter-connected nature of mobility in the early modern world. For Cresswell, constellations of mobility are “historically and geographically specific formations” of physical movement, representations of movement, and “ways of practising movement that make sense together.”¹³ Of course, these three aspects of mobility – the fact of physical movement, the cultural mediations of movement that give it meaning, and the experienced and embodied practice of movement – are analytical distinctions only. The task of the historian is not only to disentangle these elements but also to discern how they work together.

The imagined port scene depicted in Alessandro Salucci’s 1654 painting touches on many of these themes (see Fig. 0.1). The ships and lighthouse in the background speak of maritime journeys and long-distance connections. The painting is dominated by a disused city gate, offering a promise of controlled movement, in the form of a crumbling Roman arch. We can imagine that a pair of well-dressed figures at the harbour’s edge may well be investors awaiting the arrival of foreign cargo. The pack mule and what is possibly a post-horse depicted in the foreground speak to the small-scale, regional movement of goods and information, as do the porters, pedlars, and boatmen who punctuate the scene. The painting provides a study in the contrasting forces of stasis and motion, and the varying scales of movement that contributed to the making of early modern mobility.

In the pages that follow, we suggest that an exploration of some of the everyday, repeated elements of mobility encountered in embodied movement

11 For meshwork, see Ingold, *Lines*.

12 Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture*, 5. See also recent work on the value of combining global and microhistorical approaches: De Vito and Gerritsen, eds., *Micro-Spatial Histories*; Bertrand and Calafat, eds., “Micro-analyse et histoire globale;” Ghobrial, “Global History and Microhistory.”

13 Cresswell, “Towards a Politics of Mobility,” 17–19; idem, *On the Move*.



Figure 0.1 Alessandro Salucci, *A Seaport with Figures*, ca. 1656. Oil on canvas. 84.8 x 130.4 cm. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 404916.

and localized forms of mobility allows some of the distinctive features of mobility across distance to be placed in perspective. This introduction begins at the micro-level of the body, its gestures and movements, before expanding outwards to consider small-scale urban and regional itineraries. Finally, we turn to consider some of the global trajectories that more and more people and things followed in the early modern period.

Moving bodies

The Italian acrobat Arcangelo Tuccaro was typical of the entertainers of his day. Like many performers and artists, Tuccaro's career was highly itinerant, as he made his way from Italy to the courts of Vienna and Paris in search of employment. Tuccaro is emblematic of two different forms of embodied movement: what we might think of as "movement in place" and "movement through space." He was certainly no typical acrobat, and not only in the good fortune of his eventual court appointment as *saltarin du Roi*, or "Tumbler to the King." In high Renaissance style, Tuccaro was an acrobat-philosopher who expounded the elements of his art according to geometric principles. In a book of dialogues published in 1599, Tuccaro espoused a veritable cosmology of embodied movement – dancers, he suggested in one passage,

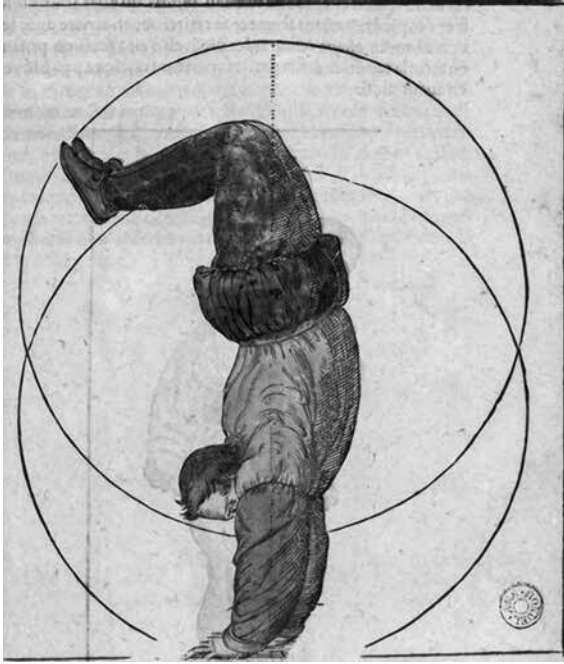


Figure 0.2 Arcangelo Tuccaro, *Trois dialogues de l'exercice de sauter, et voltiger en l'air*, f. 109r. Paris: Claude de Monstroeil, 1599. Hand-coloured woodcut print depicting the standing backflip. Photo: BnF / Gallica.

imitate the movement of heavenly bodies across the sky. Yet what is most notable about Tuccaro's handbook are his detailed descriptions of bodily movement. In more than ten pages devoted to the standing backflip, for example, Tuccaro minutely describes the relative positioning of feet, knees, arms, hands, shoulders, neck, and head at each stage of motion. In the woodcut illustration from the volume shown here, the upper circle traces the range of motion of the feet, the lower circle that of the hands, while a vertical line traced through legs, torso and arms indicates the linear axis the acrobat's body is to maintain while in motion (Fig. 0.2).¹⁴

Tuccaro was not alone in his close observation and description of movement in place. Scholars have documented the gradual implementation of regimes of bodily control across many spheres of early modern social activity. Tuccaro's dialogues on tumbling can stand for a panoply of manuals and treatises on gesture, manners, dance, horsemanship, fencing, sport, and other arts that sought to map and control the motions of the human

14 Tuccaro, *Trois dialogues*, 36v, 106v–112v.

body. They shared a singular aim: to sensitize the individual to the range of gesture and movement in themselves and others and to provide mastery of their physical environment.¹⁵

The recovery of bodily movement in the past is fraught with difficulty, as has been recognized by several scholars. Work in these fields thus has much to contribute to a new understanding of experienced, embodied mobility more generally in the early modern world.¹⁶ The instructions in one dance manual are typical of the emphasis on controlled movement: “keep the body straight from the chest to the eyes, always looking straight ahead, without bending either the waist, or the knees inwards, so that a firm and straight body always accompanies these movements, without swaying from side to side as some people do, whether from affectation or bad habits.”¹⁷ As Michel Foucault has famously shown, analogous regimes of controlled movement were reproduced in hospitals, prisons, and military barracks, largely by following the same moral logic.¹⁸

Pre-modern embodied movement was bound in layers of moral signification, as a rich literature on gesture has shown.¹⁹ Gesture was one of the most universally practised and observed forms of bodily movement. Alongside the more narrow, modern notion of gesture as the movement of the hands – “gesticulation” – the early modern syntax of gesture included things like facial expression and comportment. The perception and performance of gesture was a form of everyday knowledge. Medical and moral science taught that gesture varied from person to person and from one place to another. What was required was constant scrutiny by self and others to achieve the appropriate range of movement. The unifying principle was that of modesty, defined in one manual as “the virtue which keeps manners, movements and all our activity above insufficiency but below excess.”²⁰ While vigorous, assured movement may have been suitable for the courtier or acrobat, it was not befitting the monk or widow. The ideal of controlled movement passed by many names: decorum, civility, or Castiglione’s famous *sprezzatura* or

15 Van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 82, 92.

16 Nevile, “Decorum and Desire;” Nevile, ed., *Dance, Spectacle*; Arcangeli, *Davide o Salomè?*; Schmidt, “Sauter et voltiger en l’air.”

17 Roodenburg, “Dancing in the Dutch Republic,” 353.

18 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

19 Bremmer and Roodenburg, eds. *Cultural History of Gesture*; Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes*; idem, “Ethics of Gesture;” Magli, “The Face and the Soul;” Vigarello, “Upward Training of the Body;” Knox, “Gesture and Comportment;” Niccoli, “Gesti e posture.” See also John Gallagher’s chapter in this volume.

20 Schmitt, “Ethics of Gesture,” 139.



“nonchalance” – the studied practice of seemingly effortless, “natural” movement. Whatever it was called, the general idea was the same. Moral character and social standing were communicated through control of the external movements of hand, face, and body.

Early modern people were well aware that gesture varied from one place to another. Travellers frequently commented on the range and variety of gesture. One English traveller, Thomas Overbury, even poked fun at the studied cosmopolitanism of what he called the “affective” traveller: “his attire speaks *French* or *Italian*, and his gait cries, *Behold me*.” Another Englishman abroad, Fynes Moryson, disguised himself as an Italian when spying on the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine in Rome. Yet Moryson was aware that “strange gestures” would betray him as surely as his clothes or his accent.²¹ The traveller’s task, therefore, was to decipher the local semiotics of gesture.

Walking was the most common form of early modern urban and regional mobility, of “movement through space.” While Moryson, for example, frequently made his way by coach, wagon, or rented post-horse during his continental travels, he also routinely covered significant distances on foot when towns were relatively close together or the scenery pleasant, or simply to save money.²² While most people in this period likely walked without thinking too much about it, walking could be a highly performative activity. Like other forms of gesture, things like pace and gait conveyed character and social status.²³ As Filippo De Vivo notes in his nuanced study of walking in early modern Venice, walking “was imbued with special yet ambivalent significance, as it both tied the city together and set people apart.” De Vivo’s study of Venice is of especial methodological importance for its attention to how a universal bodily practice of movement was conditioned by the particularities of local topographic, economic, and social realities.²⁴ Other work has emphasized the role of walking in connecting the inter-dependent logistical, social, architectural, and symbolic systems that structured urban space.²⁵ Just as modern cities are oriented around the automobile, early modern cities were shaped by the flow of foot traffic. Pedestrian movement determined the distribution of architectural space and the organization of

21 In Leary, “Past Mobilities,” 9; Moryson, *Itinerary*, 304. On Moryson, see John Gallagher’s chapter in this volume.

22 Morrison, *Itinerary*, e.g. 201, 308, 365.

23 O’Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture*; De Vivo, “Walking in Sixteenth-Century Venice.”

24 De Vivo, “Walking in Sixteenth-Century Venice.”

25 Leary, “Past Mobilities;” Newsome, “Making Movement Meaningful.” See also Eckstein, “Florence on Foot;” Riello, “Material Culture of Walking;” Nevola, *Street Life*; and the essays in Gonzalez Martin, Salzberg, and Zenobi, eds., “Cities in Motion.”



the streets, alleys, and passageways that connected sites of civic, economic, and religious activity.

Crossing borders

Beyond the level of individual bodies and the micro-mobilities of everyday life, there is a well-developed field of scholarship on the longer-range journeys of early modern things and people. Much of this has followed the most prominent written sources, especially travel diaries, focusing on travel as an elite, voluntary activity.²⁶ Nonetheless, in the last two decades there have been growing calls for a more expansive and inclusive conception of mobility. This requires dialogue between fields such as the history of travel, transport, and migration and collapsing traditional conceptual distinctions between different kinds of movement: between long and short distance, forced and voluntary migration, permanent and temporary dislocation, and so on.²⁷ Historians have increasingly recognized that early modern journeys might be motivated by a variety of overlapping, intersecting motives, and that they frequently involved more complex trajectories than simply moving from A to B.

As well as study of more familiar mobile groups from higher and lower ends of the social spectrum (from diplomats, pilgrims, merchants, and grand tourists to beggars and vagabonds), research is beginning to bring into focus a greater variety of people on the move, among them the students, friars, missionaries, alms collectors, news writers, healers, and patients examined in this volume. In the case of migration history, this has meant shifting away from a concentration on immigration or emigration and the “ethnic minorities” settled in cities to examine itinerant individuals, circular and seasonal migrants, and various “floating” groups who may have left fewer traces in the archive or on the built environment but who nonetheless constituted an important component of early modern societies.²⁸ Far from

26 For brief, useful overviews, see Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*; Verdon, *Travel in the Middle Ages*.

27 See already Lucassen and Lucassen’s call to bridge the ‘canyon’ separating various approaches to studying migration, in their “Migration, Migration History.” See also Pooley, “Connecting Historical Studies;” Holmberg, “Renaissance and Early Modern Travel;” Gelléri and Willie, eds., *Travel and Conflict*.

28 Important collections focusing on longer-term processes of integration or marginalization of migrants but with an eye also to more transitory groups include De Munck and Winter, eds., *Gated Communities*; Quartier, Chilà, and Pluchot, eds., “*Arriver*” *en ville*.



being marginal figures, mobile people have been posited as crucial economic and cultural actors, go-betweens, and intermediaries, even if we need to beware the risk of over-emphasizing the representativeness of extremely mobile individuals in the early modern world.²⁹

A “connected” approach to mobility – surveying different kinds of journeys alongside one another as well as acknowledging how movement could have multiple, intersecting, and overlapping motivations and consequences – has led to thought-provoking studies of the exchanges and encounters that movement engendered in this period. A rich vein of scholarship has explored the connections between physical borders and religious divides, as mobility sometimes went hand in hand with confessional conflict or conversion, and could incorporate competing political, economic, and social motivations, especially in the multi-faith Mediterranean zone.³⁰

Another emerging strand of research is attentive to the infrastructures of transport, lodging, and control that were designed to facilitate, impede, and channel different forms of mobility.³¹ While road and river systems, for example, have been a classic topic of research for transport history, new work reveals how these infrastructures operated at ground level as spaces of negotiation between local authorities, travellers, and settled groups and as sites that could both reinforce and express differences of power and access.³² At the same time, there is growing awareness of how practical aspects such as the availability of new forms of transport such as coaches and improved roads had significant consequences for the material and sensorial experience of moving.³³

The economy of commercial hospitality – which ranged from closely-monitored, licenced inns and taverns to more informal and ad-hoc lodging in private houses – was especially important in placing people on the move into close contact both with other travellers and with locals, enabling economic

29 See, for example, Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Terpstra, *Religious Refugees*; Fontaine, *History of Pedlars*; Degl’Innocenti and Rospocher, “Street Singers,” and below for further discussion of the role of intermediaries. See also Ghobrial, “Moving Stories.”

30 See, for example, Fosi, *Inquisition, Conversion, and Foreigners*; Marocchi, “Saltwater Conversion;” Siebenhüner, “Mobility, Conversion and the Roman Inquisition;” Clines, “The Converting Sea.” On those who moved in order to preserve their religious identities, see Corens, *Confessional Mobility*.

31 On the recent focus on infrastructure in contemporary migration studies, see Meeus, van Heur, and Arnaut, “Migration and the Infrastructural Politics;” Korpela, “Infrastructure.”

32 See Geltner, *Roads to Health*; Guldi, *Roads to Power*; Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement*; and the work of the Early Modern Mobility Research Group at Stanford University (https://emmobility.github.io/emm_site/).

33 See Gerrit Verhoeven’s chapter in this volume.



and other forms of exchange. Such “spaces of arrival” brought various kinds of mobile individuals into proximity but also served to reinforce social distinctions and reproduce distinct experiences of mobility, as newcomers could meet a very different reception depending on factors such as social standing, gender, place of origin, and mode of transport.³⁴

Study of the organization of Mediterranean merchant communities has emphasized the role of stable nodes where mercantile mobility was controlled and managed. One of the characteristic institutions of Mediterranean trade was the *fondaco*, a logistical base for coordinating the mercantile activities of a foreign community or “nation.” Common across both the Muslim and Christian Mediterranean, the *fondaco* concentrated a cluster of services and mechanisms into a single space, providing foreign merchants with lodging and warehouse facilities, a location to conduct commercial transactions, and a customs station for taxation by local authorities. By the sixteenth century, *fondaci* within Europe had largely ceased to provide lodging and increasingly served as warehouses and sites for coordinating logistics. Outside Europe, *fondaci* continued to provide a mechanism for civil authorities to regulate the movement of foreign merchants within the local urban environment. Where the residential function of the *fondaco* was maintained in continental Europe, as in the famous Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice, this served an identical function.³⁵

At the same time as infrastructures shaped experiences of mobility, flows of people and goods in turn left their mark on the physical spaces of the urban environment, with the erection and maintenance of walls, gates, quays, and customs stations as well as *fondaci*, inns, and lodging houses.³⁶ While increased consideration has been given to major urban hubs where large numbers of people moved around and came and went every day, there is still work to be done on investigating the impact of mobility on rural areas of transit and passage and on smaller, less heterogenous communities, which nevertheless participated in the operation of an inn, a checkpoint, or a customs station. Indeed, scholars are beginning to show how peripheral and border zones between city and countryside, or between one polity and

34 For an overview of research on inns in early modern Europe, see Kümin and Tlustý, *World of the Tavern*. See also Salzberg, “Mobility, Cohabitation and Cultural Exchange;” and Salzberg, “Little Worlds in Motion.”

35 Constable, *Housing the Stranger*, 64; Braunstein, *Les allemands*.

36 See, for example, Gonzalez Martin, Salzberg, and Zenobi, eds., “Cities in Motion;” Nevola, *Street Life*.



another, were crucial sites for the contestation and negotiation of different kinds of mobilities.³⁷

In addition to physical spaces, it is increasingly evident that the early modern period was pivotal in the development of ever more complex bureaucratic regimes to identify and monitor people on the move. Systems of documentary identification in particular came to play a much larger role in shaping the lives and movements of mobile people. Indeed, Sebouh Aslanian has argued that the escalation in global mobility in the early modern period, together with increasingly rapid information flows, helped to spark an early modern “crisis of recognizability” that in turn triggered new practices of identification like the use of passports and licences.³⁸

Infrastructures to control mobility – both bureaucratic and architectural – proliferated in this period for many reasons, not least because the movement of people and goods could be, quite literally, a matter of life and death. As the onslaught of the Black Death in the fourteenth century was followed with brutal regularity by further bouts of plague, European polities worked to implement and refine mechanisms to control the movement of people and contagion. Cities such as Ragusa (now Dubrovnik), Venice, and Milan were especially susceptible to disease outbreaks due to their position as centres of trade and transit. These cities were also among the first to establish systems of quarantine for newly arrived people and goods, bans on travel to or from infected places, and the use of health passes authorising the movement of healthy travellers. These were later adopted in many other parts of Europe and elsewhere across the globe.³⁹

At the same time, studies increasingly point to the many difficulties encountered in enforcing general rules and restrictions on the movement of people at the local level. As various chapters in this book suggest, we need to be attentive not only to normative decrees but also to the actual practices adopted in specific localities and to consider how top-down attempts to control movement were enacted, experienced, and understood by everyday actors.⁴⁰

37 Canepari, “Unsettled Space;” Hewlett, “Locating *Contadini*;” Zenobi, “Borders and the Politics of Space;” Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement*.

38 See Aslanian, “‘Many Have Come Here’;” and his chapter in this volume. See also Groebner, *Who Are You?*; Eliav-Feldon, *Renaissance Impostors*; Greefs and Winter, eds., *Control of Migration*; and Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement*. On the continued importance of other ways of establishing identity such as oral testimony and neighbourhood *fama*, see Buono, “La manutenzione dell’identità;” Ghobrial, “Moving Stories;” Berry, “Go to Hyr Neybors.”

39 Tomic, *Expelling the Plague*; Crawshaw, “Quarantine;” Bamji, “Health Passes.” See also Darka Bilić’s chapter in this volume.

40 See in particular the chapters by Irene Fosi and Sebouh Aslanian in this volume.

Networks, distance, circulation

As the preceding sketch illustrates, there were numerous local and regional mechanisms in place to manage and control human mobility. Long-distance travel – whether intra-European or inter-continental – was facilitated by similar constellations of institutions and practices. Scholars have recently begun to bring into sharper focus the social relationships and material arrangements necessary for maintaining connectivity and controlling movement across distance.

Any consideration of long-distance mobility in the early modern world must necessarily begin with trade and commerce, the primary motor of geographic mobility in the pre-modern age. Economic historians have identified numerous institutions and practices that shaped the regional, continental, and global exchange of goods in this period. These include the family firm and its branch offices, partnerships, and trade fairs; shared record-keeping, accounting, and communication practices; and credit and legal mechanisms such as banking, bills of exchange, and contracts.⁴¹

Studies that have moved beyond the institutionally rooted analytical framework that informs traditional approaches to economic history have illuminated the web of relationships that shaped the flow of people and goods. Much of this work is animated by concerns about networks and the spaces and places in which they operated.⁴² As long-distance trade intensified and expanded between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the infrastructures and mechanisms of mobility forged by trade networks supported numerous forms of non-mercantile movement, some of which are touched upon by the chapters in the present volume.

Network analysis strives to identify the hubs, nodes, routes, and pathways that permit a network to function. Within a mobilities framework, the goal is not simply to describe movement across a network but rather to explore “the very different and often complex qualities of movement, flux, viscosity and stasis” that maintain connectivity in long-distance relationships.⁴³ Hubs, nodes, and routes perform mobility at different scales and make different demands of the social actors that populate any network. As Sebouh Aslanian has argued in his study of the Armenian merchants of

41 See for example Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*; Aslanian, *Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*.

42 On trade networks, see the useful discussion of Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants*, 24–31; Aslanian, *Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 6–15.

43 Merriman, *Mobility, Space and Culture*, 5.



New Julfa, early modern trade networks require both migratory mobility and sedentary nodes; they “need ‘anchor points’ not only to ‘fasten’ them in place and endow them with permanence and stability but also to steer or route, facilitate, and channel circulatory flows of men, information, and capital.”⁴⁴ Work on inter-continental mercantile mobility routinely emphasizes the inter-connected nature of long-distance trade with local and regional trade networks, whether in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, or Indian Ocean trade corridors.⁴⁵

The kinds of mercantile mobility on a planetary scale that emerged over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries differed from earlier forms of long-distance mobility in significant ways. Foremost among these changes were the exponential increase in the distances covered and the consequent duration and intensity of maritime experience, the astonishingly high mortality rates suffered by social actors of all ranks, the systematic use of state-sanctioned violence, and the plurality of non-European cultures encountered. Yet when European traders left the Mediterranean to pursue trade in the Atlantic and, later, Indian oceans, familiar networks of trading nodes were established. The string of Portuguese *feitoria* or “factories” and the strategically located trading posts of the Dutch and English merchant companies shared many structural similarities with the Mediterranean *fondaci* mentioned above. This was due in part to some of the commonalities across Eurasian trade and in part to the deliberate reproduction of familiar modalities further afield. We now have detailed, ground-level studies of European trading nodes as multi-faceted sites of transit, exchange, and short- and long-term migration.⁴⁶

Merchant diasporas are another research area with important implications for mobility research. Recent work has shown that maintaining commercial relationships among far-flung members of distinct cultural and religious communities – Sephardic Jews, Armenians, Portuguese New Christians, or Multani Indians – did not flow effortlessly from a shared cultural identity but rather operated on the basis of a host of formal and informal institutions and practices for enforcing contracts, sharing information, and maintaining trust across distance.⁴⁷ At the same time, members

44 Aslanian, *Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 14.

45 Casado Alonso, “Viajes y negocios;” Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa*; Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*.

46 Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa*; Ward, *Networks of Empire*; Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*; Sicking, “Medieval Origin of the Factory.”

47 Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*; Aslanian, *Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*; Forrest and Haour, “Trust in Long-Distance Relationships.”



of these groups became adept at “establishing durable commercial relations with persons who did not speak their language, wore different garb, and worshipped other gods.”⁴⁸

Bringing mercantile mobility into closer focus has allowed for greater precision in thinking about patterns and intensities of migration flows. In the Eurasian sphere of maritime commerce, the actual number of globally mobile social actors was relatively low in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, never more than a few thousand individuals in any given year. Though lying outside the scope of this introduction, New World mobility configurations experienced radically different migration patterns that involved massive settler migration and the large-scale coerced migration of African and indigenous populations. These population flows engendered numerous mechanisms for the coordination of long-distance and local mobility that came to characterize colonial societies in the Americas.⁴⁹

If merchants themselves circulated in relatively low numbers, research on mercantile networks has uncovered many of the other social actors and technologies that facilitated commercial mobility. Intermediaries – sometimes identified as exotic ‘go-betweens’ – were habitual, everyday players within long-distance networks. Studies of European commercial centres have shown how long-distance continental trade depended upon local intermediaries such as factors, procurators, brokers, notaries, innkeepers, auctioneers, and muleteers.⁵⁰ Outside Europe, intermediaries in possession of local knowledge and specialized administrative, technical, and linguistic skills were crucial in brokering cross-cultural interactions of all kinds. Numerous studies have differentiated the highly specific ways in which intermediaries functioned, as well as the obstacles and risks they encountered as they crossed boundaries.⁵¹

The important role played by the circulation of information in maintaining long-distance networks has been emphasized by numerous scholars. Letters, reports, accounts, identity documents, and other paper tools were not merely the flotsam and jetsam of mobility. They were, rather, one of the key technologies that facilitated long-distance exchange. The flow of

48 Trivellato, “Cross-Cultural Trade,” 2.

49 See O’Reilly, “Movements of People in the Atlantic World,” for an overview.

50 Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism*; Reyerson, *Art of the Deal*; Salzberg, “Little Worlds in Motion.”

51 See Raj, “Go-Betweens, Travelers, and Cultural Translators,” for an incisive overview; for examples, see Metcalf, *Go-Betweens*; Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien*; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*; Bonnote-Hoover, “Language, Mediation, Conflict;” Rizzi, “Interpreting in Early Modern Diplomacy.”



information has long been considered fundamental to Eurasian trade – “a luxury commodity ... worth its weight in gold,” in Braudel’s classic formulation.⁵² While up-to-date knowledge of prices and markets was important for the successful execution of commercial transactions, the routine exchange of written instruments played a crucial role in maintaining connectivity between far-flung social actors. Written records were not the by-product of long-distance relationships but were one of the constituent components of the network. Within Europe, the development of an effective and extensive postal network over the course of the sixteenth century only intensified the role of information exchange.⁵³ The “Committees for Correspondence” of the joint-stock mercantile corporations such as the English and Dutch East India companies, instituted to coordinate communication and the exchange of written records with their overseas offices, are an important indication of the importance of bureaucracy and paperwork for long-distance exchange in the early modern centuries.⁵⁴

Though the material and bureaucratic apparatus of global mobility was organized according to the social logic of commerce, merchants and commercial goods were not the only people and things that moved. Other social actors and material objects travelled along these same pathways. Such parallel patterns of movement generated documentation and material evidence which, when combined with well-developed interpretive traditions in several fields of cultural history, can be used to illuminate many of the material, experiential, and intersubjective aspects of early modern mobility.

Students, bureaucrats, pilgrims, and missionaries all moved along mercantile routes and pathways at varying scales.⁵⁵ Recent work on early modern pilgrimage offers critical insights into the connected nature of mobility in the early modern period. It has been argued, for example, that “the iconic Western image of a long-distance pilgrim is far from representative of all pilgrimage practices, let alone broader sacred mobilities.”⁵⁶ Religious sites were connected by an “interlocking geography” of pilgrim pathways linking local, regional, and transnational sites of devotion. As a practice, pilgrimage

52 Braudel, *Mediterranean*, 1: 365; Melis, “Intensità e regolarità nella diffusione dell’informazione;” Casado Alonso, “Los flujos de información;” Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants*, 24–25.

53 For an overview, see Schobesberger et al., “European Postal Networks.”

54 Ogborn, *Indian Ink*; Aslanian, *Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 86–120; Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, 74–77.

55 For missionaries, see for example Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*; Palomo, “Cultura religiosa;” Rubial García, “Religiosos viajeros.”

56 Maddrell, Terry, and Gale, eds., *Sacred Mobilities*, 3.



can be considered a collaboration of people, objects, and places where sacrality is activated through movement.⁵⁷ Pilgrims and merchants travelled the same roads, lodged in the same places, and were frequently one and the same person. Pilgrimage too spawned its own interconnected networks, as illustrated by the Franciscans responsible for the upkeep of Holy Land monuments studied by Felicita Tramontana in this volume. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed an explosion in both regional and long-distance pilgrimage across Catholic Europe, with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in transit every year.⁵⁸ Nor was this phenomenon limited to Europe. As Eric Tagliacozzo has shown, in Southeast Asia the Hajj pilgrimage was deeply intertwined with Indian Ocean mercantile networks.⁵⁹

Other social groups populated the roads and sea routes of the early modern world, such as the 'Grand Tour' travellers studied by Gerrit Verhoeven, the Protestant students in Italy studied by Irene Fosi, and the diplomat-in-training Fynes Morrison studied by John Gallagher in this volume. Many of these actors operated with a heightened sense of perceptual awareness. Documenting the experience of pilgrimage, mission, or commercial travel through journals, letters, logs, and other written instruments was an integral component of many modes of early modern mobility. Traditionally these types of sources have been lumped together as a more or less homogenous body of 'travel' or 'exploration' literature. Yet when subjected to critical scrutiny and situated within the knowledge traditions that generated them, this body of documentation offers valuable testimony on the configurations and contingencies of early modern mobility. Taken as a whole they contributed to the "active making of a new global geography in the early modern period."⁶⁰ Used creatively, they can illuminate the 'meshwork' of early modern mobility alluded to at the outset of this introduction: the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and other phenomena of movement across streets, roads, and seas.⁶¹

57 Tingle, "Sacred Landscapes," 91; Vincent and Pycke, eds., *Cathédrale et pèlerinage*; Forster, *Catholic Revival*, 77–121; Nelson, "The Parish in Its Landscapes;" Maddrell and Scriven, "Celtic Pilgrimage."

58 Delano-Smith, "Milieu of Mobility;" Tingle, "Sacred Landscapes;" Duhamelle, "Pèlerinage et économie;" Maddrell et al., eds., *Christian Pilgrimage*.

59 Tagliacozzo, "Crossing the Great Water;" idem, *Longest Journey*.

60 Ogborn, "Writing Travels," 157; see also Raj, "Go-Betweens;" Rubiés, "Instructions for Travelers;" Mancall, "What Fynes Moryson Knew;" Rubiés, ed., *Medieval Ethnographies*. On conventions of early modern travel-writing see also John Gallagher's chapter in this volume.

61 For the maritime environment, see e.g. Arbel, "Daily Life on Board;" Brockey, "*Largos caminhos*;" Tempère, *Vivre et mourir*.

Recent work by students of material culture and historians of art and architecture points in several complementary directions. Trade goods – whether calico cotton, dye woods, or spices – not only acquired value in transit but also forged new networks and acquired new meanings.⁶² The mobility of material objects can be regarded as integral to cultural and social dynamics. Movement and transformation are encountered not as external epiphenomena leaving deposits or encrustations to be scraped away, but rather as constitutive of objects themselves.

From this perspective, objects are considered to be characterized by mutability rather than fixity. Mobility involves both physical and cultural trajectories. Several recent studies have transcended the social-material nexus in which mobile people and goods are habitually situated to explore the range of geographical, cultural, interpretive, and taxonomic mobilities experienced by objects.⁶³ Mobility is considered not a by-product of cultural exchange but as central to an object's form and meaning as things migrate across media, space, time, and culture.

New ways of conceiving of the global movement of people, goods, information, texts, and knowledge conceptualize movement as occurring upon a continuum, as part of wider systems and networks of circulation. The notion of circulation provides another useful framework for exploring the varying scales and multiple modalities of mobility. Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam have argued that “circulation is different from simple mobility, in as much as it implies a double movement of going back and forth and coming back, which can be repeated indefinitely. In circulating, things, men and notions often transform themselves.”⁶⁴ While circulation is not the same as movement, it occurs within and across bounded spaces that are themselves frequently in geographical, temporal, and conceptual flux.⁶⁵

At the same time, the framework of circulation has been criticized for “privileging mobility as its core concern” and therefore “ironically constrict[ing] the space to think about those who did not travel but were crucially implicated in the history of movement and circulation.”⁶⁶ And indeed, future scholarship will not only need to track how and why things and people moved but also examine how, why, and where they came to

62 Riello, *Cotton*; Fraser, ed., *Mobility of People*.

63 Bleichmar and Martin, eds., “Objects in Motion;” Göttler and Mochizuki, eds., *The Nomadic Object*.

64 Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation*, 2–3.

65 Raj, “Beyond Postcolonialism,” 345.

66 Sinha, “The Idea of Home,” 211.



rest; to “critique and redesign the framework of circulation to include both immobility and small-scale circulations.”⁶⁷ A mobilities approach is ideally suited to differentiate these features of early modern society. As Kapil Raj has argued, “a focus on mobility ... allows us to study intercultural relationships and phenomena at all scales, from the local to the planetary and not only in the past, but also right up to the present day.”⁶⁸ To echo Raj, mobility is not the same as peregrination. There was much in the early modern world that cannot simply be willed into motion: elements of permanence, rootedness, stasis, resistance, and friction need to be accounted for in the study of mobility in any period of human history. By bringing forms of embodied and local mobility into dialogue with the study of movement across distance, things rooted in place also emerge in a new light.

The organization of the volume

Following the framework charted above, this volume is organized into three sections. The chapters in the first section, “Moving Bodies,” explore the day-to-day motivations and experience of movement. John Gallagher’s chapter considers linguistic impediments to travel and the mechanisms for negotiating multilingual communication through the study of the English traveller Fynes Moryson’s *Itinerary* (1617). Though one of the most oft-cited travel authors of the early modern period, Moryson himself has rarely been the subject of critical scrutiny. Gallagher offers a careful reconstruction of Moryson’s world and shows how the *Itinerary* can be used to shed light on many of the practicalities of mobility normally hidden from view.

In a similar vein, Gerrit Verhoeven’s chapter, “Wading through the Mire,” re-situates traditional narratives of the Grand Tour by placing mobility at the centre of the experience of recreational travel in the early modern period. Through a detailed study of Dutch and Flemish travel diaries, Verhoeven locates the Grand Tour between the improved infrastructure and “hardware” for long-distance travel that emerged over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the shifting emotional and aesthetic responses to geographic dislocation. These included, for example, a new valorization of the landscape as not simply something to be passed through but as a tourist “site” in its own right, viewed from barge or coach.

67 Ibid., 214.

68 Raj, “Go-Betweens,” 43.



Carolyn Schmitz's chapter, "Travelling for Health," considers how mobility played a crucial role in the quest for health. Schmitz analyzes the routine local and regional journeys undertaken by patients in rural Spain. Based on the study of Inquisition trials of practitioners of "irregular" medicine, Schmitz shows that everyday people routinely travelled both shorter and longer distances in search of healing, meeting up with healers at nodal points such as inns. Those too ill to travel might send samples of their urine or hair with messengers for analysis. The decisive factor of movement in these cases, Schmitz suggests, was not the lack of medical expertise close to home but rather the patient's desire for a particular form of treatment.

The chapters in the second section, "Crossing Borders," take a closer look at some of the mechanisms and infrastructures that worked to channel and control the movement of people, goods, and information over distance. In "Quarantine, Mobility, and Trade," Darka Bilić examines lazzarettos in the early modern Adriatic. She demonstrates how these sites, originally established as hospitals for the treatment and isolation of plague victims, increasingly performed crucial commercial functions that allowed the flow of trade to continue almost uninterrupted even in times of epidemic, while at the same time minimizing the spread of disease. Tracking how the lazzaretto buildings were adapted over time for this purpose, Bilić unearths fascinating details about the use of travel documents, the disinfection of goods, and the practice and experience of quarantine for people on the move through this border region between the Venetian and Ottoman empires.

In "Mobility and Danger on the Borders of the Papal States," Irene Fosi focuses on another highly trafficked zone of transit and encounter. Fosi analyzes the case of "heretical" northern Europeans who travelled to central-northern Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to study, work, or trade. These temporary migrants represented both a religious threat and an economic opportunity to secular and ecclesiastical authorities in the Papal States. The rich source material studied by Fosi sheds light on the day-to-day efforts of the Roman Inquisition to stop the "infection of heresy" by controlling the movement of foreign students, merchants, and artists in their territories. As such, Fosi's chapter again highlights the multiple, sometimes conflicting resonances of mobility in the early modern world and suggests that scholars need to be attentive not only to normative decrees but also to the actual practices adopted on the ground in specific locations.

Paola Molino's contribution, "News on the Road," similarly underlines the importance of shifting between differing scales of analysis by tracing the



“mobile technology” of handwritten newsletters. Highlighting how mobility and immobility intertwined, Molino describes how fixed infrastructures such as an expanding postal network enabled the dissemination of news, with regular newsletters emanating from the shops of newswriters in Europe’s major urban centres and reaching disparate networks of subscribers. These largely immobile newswriters thus played a fundamental role in managing flows of news stories from all directions: cutting and pasting, borrowing and censoring, as well as translating across numerous languages, and thereby shaping the transmission of information, opinions, truth, and falsehood.

The chapters in the last section, “Global Networks,” explore three different examples of how long-distance networks were activated in the context of early modern religious mobility. In his chapter, Paul Nelles explores the global circulation of *Agnus Dei*, wax devotional objects made from leftover Easter candles in Rome and blessed by the pope. The chapter studies the global diffusion of the *Agnus Dei* cult across the Jesuit missionary network. Headquartered in Rome and with ready access to the disks, Nelles shows how Jesuit missionaries not only physically transported *Agnus Dei* to Asia and the Americas but also served as proxies for their Roman origin and as guarantors of their efficacy. With symbolic and material ties to baptism rites, the aquatic associations of *Agnus Dei* made them particularly valuable in warding off the perils of sea travel, in exorcism, and as markers of contact and conversion.

Felicita Tramontana’s chapter, “Getting to the Holy Land,” studies how Franciscan friars organized the transfer of alms from Europe to the eastern Mediterranean for the upkeep of Christian holy sites. Tramontana shows how the Franciscan system, while reliant on mercantile infrastructure for the physical movement of funds and friars, drew on a far-flung network of Franciscan establishments that served to anchor and facilitate mobility at the local level.

In the final chapter in the volume, “From Mount Lebanon to the Little Mount in Madras,” Sebouh Aslanian explores the movement of Andreas Ouzounean, a Catholic Armenian alms collector from Lebanon. As Aslanian shows, Father Andreas’s journeys – which included stops in Rome, Moscow, Istanbul, Calcutta, and Madras – were supported by the robust state-funded infrastructure networks that spanned the region. Aslanian draws particular attention to the role of correspondence, transcontinental alms certificates, and credit instruments in facilitating the flow of funds from the Armenian mercantile diaspora to religious institutions in Lebanon and Rome.



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