

# Introduction

## Abstract

Travel around the Indian Ocean underwent radical changes in the middle of the nineteenth century, as steam technology and a range of institutional and administrative changes facilitated an ever-increasing influx of European newcomers to the colonies of the region, with profound effects on the functioning and experience of empire. This introduction provides an overview of those changes while making an argument for the emergence of a distinct culture of trans-colonial proto-tourism in the period, as seen in places like Java, the Straits Settlements and Ceylon. Imitational and iterative rather than a fully-fledged industry, proto-tourism nevertheless played a key role in legitimising and communicating this new stage of colonisation to metropolitan audiences.

**Keywords:** proto-tourism, colonial history, nineteenth century, Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia

## Touring through changing empires

When Augustus De Butts, then a lieutenant in the British colonial army, published a rather lighthearted account of his travels on Ceylon in 1841, he took occasion in the preface to lament the lack of attention paid to the island by the travel writers of his time: “[f]rom Delhi to Cape Comorin, from the banks of the Indus to those of the Brahmaputra, every part of our vast Indian territories has furnished an unfailing theme for descriptive writers; yet, strange to say, the beautiful and Romantic island of Ceylon ... has remained in comparative obscurity.”<sup>1,2</sup> Of course that oversight, seen from De Butts’s opportunist perspective, was also an opening: a chance to stake a claim to his niche in the highly competitive mid-nineteenth-century market for travel literature. And he took his chance just about in time, as that niche was

<sup>1</sup> Augustus De Butts, *Rambles in Ceylon* (W.H. Allen, 1841), v.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding terminology, it should be noted that this book will consistently refer to the island by its colonial name “Ceylon”, as it deals specifically with the role of the island in colonial culture and imperial discourse; the works analysed also use “Ceylon” consistently. The same applies to other places, such as Bogor on Java: the colonial *Buitenzorg* is used instead, unless specifically referring to the pre-colonial or the post-independence era. For places where the name has not changed but the spelling has, modern variants are preferred: for example, Bandung over Bandoeng or Bandong (partly because colonial-era spellings were not consistent across time and different authors anyway). The exception are places with conventional English spellings: thus, the English Malacca is used over the Malay Melaka.

rapidly getting filled up from all sides: a few decades later, in 1875, his fellow Briton John Thomson impatiently skipped over the island in recounting his experiences in the East: "... I need not pause to detail my experiences over one of the beaten tracks of modern tourists; nor can I even venture to describe Galle ... as this part of Ceylon is on the highway to India, and therefore already well known."<sup>3</sup>

Much had changed in the intervening years, and not just on the pages of travel books. On Java, for example, travel restrictions were significantly relaxed in 1861, prompting one official to report that "the jealous fear that foreigners might come to know too much about Java has made way for new ideas."<sup>4</sup> The boom for colonial travel and travel writing coincided with, and in very important ways was entwined with, larger developments on the ground in the colonies: administrative consolidation, geographical expansion and technological advancements. Empire was changing, as were the ways in which people thought and wrote about it. In the process, areas that had so far remained relatively unknown to large European audiences suddenly showed up not only in political tracts and scholarly tomes but also, increasingly, in touristic booklets and light entertainment. The middle decades of the century firmly established empire in the popular consciousness and witnessed a blossoming of imperial popular culture.

This book looks at the intersection between two well-documented phenomena of the nineteenth century: on the one hand, the emergence of popular, middle-class tourism and its associated literary forms in European culture; and on the other, the wave of intensified Western imperialism and colonisation that occurred in the Indian Ocean region from around the middle of the century onward. Specifically, the focus will be on how European travellers in the period employed a new, touristic discourse in describing colonial spaces in travel writing and introduced touristic practices into colonial culture. The analysis will show how these new cultural elements worked to normalise and legitimise the colonisation process, and to reinforce the lines between European and Asian, white and non-white in colonial society. Popular culture also helped disseminate the knowledge produced by colonial science, filtering its findings into a streamlined, easily digestible frame of reference for experiencing colonial realities. The work is based on a close reading of a corpus of twenty-two published travel books from the period, in English and Dutch, read against the context of the print culture of the time as well as the colonial archives.

<sup>3</sup> John Thomson, *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China, and China or, Ten Years' Travels, Adventures, and Residence Abroad* (Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1875), 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Overzicht van de Staatkundige toestand van Nederlandsch-Indië op het tijdstip der aftreding van den Gouverneur Generaal Sloet van de Beelë. Met advies van de Raad van Indië' (1866/7), Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (from now on NA Den Haag), Ministerie van Koloniën: Supplement (2.10.03), inv. nr. 24, 585.

The timeframe of the analysis is set at roughly 1840–1875. Rather than any single, individual events, these dates have been chosen as approximate markers for a range of developments in the fields of technology, politics and culture, and for innovations in both the concrete practices of travel and the print sphere of travel writing. In the most concrete sense, the period saw an opening up of a new world of travel defined by technological transition, beginning with the widescale introduction of transoceanic steam shipping in the 1840s and further expanding with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The significance of the former for ease and reliability of travel can hardly be overstated. As for the latter, the chosen timeframe allows the analysis to capture early reactions to, and reflections on, an event that cut travel times and greatly facilitated movement between Europe and Asia by removing the burdensome overland leg of the journey across Egypt. Pragmatically speaking, a focus on such a limited period of time also serves to allow an in-depth analysis of this moment of changing travel, based on a close reading of sources that would not be possible for any extended period.

The book makes interventions in the historiography that are both chronological and geographical in nature. One of its main arguments is that the period under discussion witnessed the emergence of what I term colonial proto-tourism, decades earlier than the expansion of tourism outside Europe and North America is conventionally placed, with important consequences for the development of imperial culture and colonial life. This proto-tourism was characterised by a certain flexibility of form combined with a forceful intent: it arose from the desire of middle-class Europeans, newly arrived in Asia at the service of expanding empires, to recreate in a foreign context the experiences familiar from metropolitan tourism. Growing from the ground up, it thus predated the establishment of a mature tourist industry with its travel agents and package tours by several decades, making use of the extant infrastructures of colonisation instead, spreading its coverage along the axis of least resistance for the limited means available to an official on sick leave or an adventurous journalist.

These proto-tourists were travellers of a low profile already stationed in the region, not at all like the era's more famous globetrotters, such as the fêted celebrity authors Mark Twain or Ida Pfeiffer. Looking beyond such individual celebrities, the book makes a methodological point of analysing this genre of writing as a whole rather than focusing on any particular author, let alone the most famous ones. To allow this broad-based analysis, a careful selection of the twenty-two works, which is introduced in chapter 1, has been made according to specific criteria. Tourism was and remains a mass phenomenon and needs to be understood as such, as an art of repetition and routine. It was only made possible in colonial settings by the influx of a critical mass of European newcomers in the nineteenth century.

Geographically, the book makes an argument for the emergence of an established circuit of border-crossing, transcolonial leisure in and around Southeast Asia

around the middle of the nineteenth century. This follows calls made in recent times for imperial histories to transcend the national framework and give more attention to the linkages and entanglements across the boundaries of empires.<sup>5</sup> The spatial extent of this particular Anglo-Dutch circuit deviates somewhat from the framings conventionally used by historians and therefore requires some elaboration. For one, it straddles the modern definitions of South and Southeast Asia, labels that in any case had no exact equivalent in the nineteenth-century imperial imagination. Broadly speaking, the scope of this book coincides with what might be called an expanded notion of maritime Southeast Asia: specifically, it covers Ceylon, the British Straits Settlements – that is, the cities of Singapore, Malacca and Penang on and just off the Malay peninsula – and the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies. This may seem at first like a collection of very disparate locales under different flags and with different historical trajectories; yet, as will be seen, they formed a closely connected littoral whole, doubly bound together by transport links and history. This long history of interconnections – whether labour migrations, coerced mobilities or networks of scholarship – has been noted by several scholars, and only intensified in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

The maritime dimension of the selected spaces is underlined by the fact that all bar Malacca are islands, and therefore fundamentally dependent on and defined by overseas connections.<sup>7</sup> All were connected by busy shipping routes, especially the three major ports of these colonies: Batavia, Singapore and Point de Galle on Ceylon. With the advent of steam shipping, Ceylon became a way-station for travellers not only to India but also further east: a major artery connected Galle with Singapore and from there to Hong Kong and beyond. As for the Dutch possessions, visitors to Java were, for most of the period under consideration here, dependent on British steamers all the way up to Singapore, from where passage could be

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, 'Transimperial History – Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition', *Journal of Modern European History*, 16:4 (2018), 429–452.

<sup>6</sup> The centrality of Ceylon to the networks of the Indian Ocean is discussed in Zoltán Biedermann and Alan Strathern (eds), *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History* (UCL Press, 2017); for Southeast Asia, see Eric Tagliacozzo, *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée* (Stanford University Press, 2009); Sunil S. Amrith, 'Indians Overseas? Governing Tamil Migration to Malaya, 1870–1941', *Past & Present*, 208:1 (2010), 231–261; Koh Keng We, 'Travel and Survival in the Colonial Malay World: Mobility, Region, and the World in Johor Elite Strategies, 1818–1914', *Journal of World History*, 25:4 (2014), 559–582; Anne M. Blackburn, 'Buddhist Connections in the Indian Ocean: Changes in Monastic Mobility, 1000–1500', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 58:3 (2015), 237–266; Sunil S. Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal* (Harvard University Press, 2013); for involuntary mobility in the region, see Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer L. Gaynor, 'Ages of Sail, Ocean Basins, and Southeast Asia', *Journal of World History*, 24:2 (2013), 309–333.

secured to Batavia and onwards to Australia. These connections provided for easy and quick travel across and around the Bay of Bengal, an opportunity taken by many aspiring travel writers, as will be seen, and ultimately leading to an established set of leisure routes across the region. The selection of places has not been determined by nation-centred historiographies or the purposes of telling a simple comparative history of empires: rather, the aim here is to provide an analysis of a wider, European culture of imperialism and of colonial travel that connected these places and brought the region together in the imperial imagination.

Beyond the very concrete links provided by shipping and communications, all of these colonies were marked by entangled Anglo-Dutch imperial histories that had left prominent marks on their respective imaginaries and identities. Many of them had changed hands between the two competing powers fairly recently, some more than once: Ceylon had been a Dutch colony between 1640 and 1796, when it was taken over by the British amid the turbulences caused by the French invasion of the Netherlands. That period also saw the British assume power in the Dutch possessions of Java and Malacca, though these were returned after the Napoleonic Wars. In the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, the Dutch once more relinquished Malacca and gave up their claims on Singapore in exchange for securing their position in the archipelago. As for Penang, its rise as a commercial centre from the late eighteenth century onward was a direct consequence of British attempts to position it as a local rival to the then-Dutch port of Malacca.<sup>8</sup> The two powers were, at times, perilously balanced but also inextricably intertwined on a local level throughout the region.

More important in practice than the dates of handovers and the complicated power politics behind them were the very concrete transimperial presences those histories inscribed across the colonies in question. These took many forms: cultural, such as the writings of Stamford Raffles that straddled the region from Java to the Straits and remained authoritative throughout the century; architectural, especially in the form of the churches and city halls built by the Dutch in Malacca and Colombo, which remained in use under British rule; and demographic, as both of those colonies retained significant populations that identified as Dutch, although their European status was frequently questioned, as will be seen. Overall, then, the historical legacies of empire meant that the Dutch and British travellers discussed in this book could journey across the region, not as Dutchmen in a British colony or vice versa, but as Europeans in a shared Anglo-Dutch transimperial space. Tracing

<sup>8</sup> C. M. Turnbull, 'Penang's Changing Role in the Straits Settlements, 1826–1946', in Yeoh Seng Guan et al. (eds), *Penang and Its Region: The Story of an Asian Entrepôt* (NUS Press, 2009), 30–38; Bernard Z. Keo, 'Colonial City, Global Entanglements: Intra- and Trans-Imperial Networks in George Town, 1786–1937', *Journal of World History*, 35:1 (2024), 1–2.

the contours of that cultural sphere, the corpus analysed here will thus be a mix of works by British and Dutch travellers.

Having established the parameters of the study, a word or two about what has not been included. Notably, the inland Malay peninsula and the so-called outer possessions of the Dutch East Indies, though geographically contiguous and historically closely connected, are excluded from the analysis, as the process of colonisation in those spaces took a very different trajectory over a very different time scale. As such, they were not comparable destinations of colonial travel in the period under discussion here. British India has also been largely decentred from the discussion in favour of the diverse transcolonial littoral zone outlined above. Certainly, India represents by some distance the most researched case study of European imperialism in the region. Yet that dominance also has a downside: it can be easy to lose sight of the specificities of the smaller, surrounding colonies and the connections between them when set alongside an entire sub-continent, and there were fundamental differences between the workings of a massive land-based colony like India and the more sea-oriented islands and ports of the region. Of course, as the most populous colony in the region, it was India where many of the travellers and authors considered here were based; moreover, Calcutta was not only the capital of British India but also the centre of British colonial publishing, and as such its cultural influence could not fail to be keenly felt throughout the region, as will be seen.

Broadly speaking, the period under discussion here corresponds to what Peter Boomgaard has called, perhaps provocatively, the end of the early modern period in Southeast Asian history – on technological and socio-political grounds.<sup>9</sup> A moment of infrastructural and systemic change, it represented a transformation in the complex of Anglo-Dutch imperialism in the region, a decisive shift toward a new kind of colonisation with expanding bureaucracies and increasing focus on territorial domination. Although conventional periodisation often places the starting point of this aggressive “new” or “high imperialism” later in the nineteenth century, with reference to events such as the Berlin Conference (1884–5) and the so-called scramble for Africa, it has long been suggested by historians working on the Indian Ocean region that its commencement should more appropriately be dated back to the middle of the century.<sup>10</sup>

Without getting too involved in a debate about the global chronologies of (mostly British) imperialism, it is enough here to align with C.A. Bayly in noting that, specifically for South and Southeast Asia, the crucial moment in colonial expansion

<sup>9</sup> Peter Boomgaard, *Southeast Asia: An Environmental History* (ABC Clio, 2007), 111.

<sup>10</sup> For an early and influential statement of that position, see John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, ‘The Imperialism of Free Trade’, *The Economic History Review*, 6:1 (1953), 1–15.

came earlier, reaching a peak around 1830.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of Singapore in 1819 and its rapid expansion to become a major commercial hub is a big part of that story, while the period was also marked by a series of wars that significantly bolstered the European position in the region. Most infamously, in the First Opium War of 1839–1842 the British struck a decisive blow against the traditional hegemon China. More importantly for the argument here, the Kandyan Wars brought all of Ceylon under British rule by 1818, and the agreements concluding the Java War of 1825–1830 established Dutch dominion over that island, reducing the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta to vassalage.<sup>12</sup>

Military victories were accompanied by significant structural and economic changes: 1830 saw the introduction by the Dutch of the so-called cultivation system (*cultuurstelsel*) on Java, a system of export agriculture driven by forced labour that has been referred to as the beginning of “the truly colonial period of Javanese history”; while from the 1830s onward, Ceylon made significant steps towards establishing a plantation economy driven by freshly arrived settlers from Europe.<sup>13</sup> Another set of changes were administrative, with power increasingly centralised and bureaucratised: by the 1840s, power in the British possessions of the region was progressively centralised in the hands of the governor-general of India, and the Government of India Act of 1858 finally side-lined the East India Company completely in favour of a new centralised administration.<sup>14</sup> As for the Straits Settlements, they passed in 1867 from the remit of the governor-general of India and under direct rule by the Colonial Office in Britain, a move justified at the time by the rapid advances in telegraph communications, which were thought to make an additional, regional administrative layer unnecessary.<sup>15</sup> In the Dutch East Indies, a professionalised, European civil service took over after the establishment in 1842 of the Royal Academy in Delft, set up to educate a specialised corps of colonial administrators.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> C.A. Bayly, ‘The First Age of Global Imperialism, c. 1760–1830’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26:2 (1998), 28–29.

<sup>12</sup> V. J. H. Houben, *Kraton and Kumpeni: Surakarta and Yogyakarta, 1830–1870*, (KITLV Press, 1994), 69–71.

<sup>13</sup> Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300* (Stanford University Press, 1993), 144.

<sup>14</sup> Ranbir Vohra, *The Making of India: A Political History* (M.E. Sharpe, 2013), 65–75; Anthony Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company: The Evolution of Anglo-Asian Commerce and Politics, 1790–1860* (Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 146–147.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Correspondence relative to the contemplated transfer of the Straits Settlements from the Government of India to the Colonial Office’ in The National Archives, London (from now on NA London), Colonial Office Records, Confidential Print Eastern, CO 882/2/1.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 118.

The general Europeanisation of administrative control also had a legislative aspect, with European legal codes systems introduced across the region: for example, 1852 saw the establishment of English law in Ceylon in various fields including maritime matters, while essentially replacing the laws of the recently annexed Kandyan Kingdom in favour of those of the British-controlled maritime provinces.<sup>17</sup> There was also a concerted effort to consolidate territorial possessions: the colonial powers were increasingly focused on drawing and policing their borders, especially in maritime Southeast Asia between the British and the Dutch, and in 1873, the Dutch invaded the sultanate of Aceh, the last significant independent political entity in their sphere.<sup>18</sup> The cumulative effect of all these developments was to significantly intensify the European presence in the region, in terms of numbers of people, area covered and influence wielded, while also creating increasingly direct cultural and political links between the European metropolises and their respective colonies. Those links naturally worked both ways and the colonisers, especially those enriched by the plantation economy, sought to engage with and participate in metropolitan culture.<sup>19</sup>

This book examines how this raft of changes was reflected in popular travel writing. It shows how the genre served to entrench ideas about empire among broader audiences, spreading information in a radically simplified form for optimal ease of consumption while filtering out awkward ambiguities or localised nuance. That there was a ready demand for such narratives is reflected in the rapid expansion of the market: beginning in the 1840s with a slew of British publications on Ceylon and expanding over the years to cover more and more of Southeast Asia, with more and more Dutch works from the 1860s on. Returning to the quotes that opened this introduction, the sense of widening horizons was aptly conveyed by John Thomson, who began his 1875 book by reference to the Suez Canal. Acknowledging that its opening had opened up not only Ceylon but all of Asia to the scope of leisurely travel, he drew the obvious conclusion: "I must therefore invite my reader to accompany me still further eastward, to the Malayan Islands and the mainland of Indo-China ... before I can hope to introduce him to people or places with which he may still be unfamiliar."<sup>20</sup> From there on, global tourism was already transforming into an increasingly institutionalised and professionalised phenomenon, a process that accelerated in the latter decades of the century with travel agents and tourist bureaus set up to respond to the rising demand.

<sup>17</sup> Ceylon Act nr. 5 1852, NA London, Colonial Office Records, CO 56/6.

<sup>18</sup> Thongchai Winichakul and Eric Tagliacozzo, 'Gradations of Colonialism in Southeast Asia's "In-Between" Places', in Norman G. Owen (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian History* (Routledge, 2014), 41; see also Eric Tagliacozzo, 'The Lit Archipelago: Coast Lighting and the Imperial Optic in Insular Southeast Asia, 1860–1910', *Technology and Culture*, 46:2 (2005), 306–328.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Van Niel, *Java under the Cultivation System: Collected Writings* (KITLV Press, 1992), 146.

<sup>20</sup> Thomson, *Straits of Malacca*, 2.

## Colonial proto-tourism in outline

At the heart of this book is an analysis of a specific, thus far under-researched genre of writing: the popular colonial travel writing of the mid-nineteenth century, which is approached as an embodiment of the phenomenon of colonial proto-tourism. As such, this work stands at the intersection of two largely separate bodies of literature: on the one hand, the cultural history of European travel and travel writing in general, and of tourism specifically; and on the other, the colonial history of South and Southeast Asia. Colonial travel writing itself is a well-researched topic, yet the leisure angle has thus far remained underexplored, with the focus tending to fall on more scholarly, scientific or exploratory forms of travel and their attendant issues of knowledge production. The gap has been pointed out, among others, by the noted historian of tourism Eric G.E. Zuelow, who has observed that historians have surprisingly neglected to explore the connections between tourism and empire, despite evidently significant overlap between the two phenomena.<sup>21</sup> Taking up that challenge, I argue that one of the great advantages of approaching colonial history through the phenomenon of tourism is its ability to bring colonial and metropolitan culture into a single framework, eliminating artificial divisions between home and overseas. As such the project at hand aligns closely with the so-called “new imperial history” with its focus on the cultural aspects of empire and the various influences flowing in both directions between empire and metropole.<sup>22</sup>

A further contribution of this book is to be found in its transnational framing of Dutch and British colonial societies and imperial cultures, building on recent trends in what has come to be called “transimperial history”.<sup>23</sup> Even with the successful mainstreaming of global history in the past decade, imperial historiographies have

<sup>21</sup> Eric G.E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 95–96; similar points have been raised in, for example, Colette Zytnicki and Habib Kazdaghli (eds), *Le tourisme dans l'empire français: Politiques, pratiques et imaginaires (XIXe-XXe siècles): Un outil de la domination coloniale?* (Société française d'histoire des outre-mers, 2009); Shelley Baranowski et al., ‘Tourism and Empire’, *Journal of Tourism History*, 7:1–2 (2015), 100–130.

<sup>22</sup> Tony Ballantyne, ‘The Changing Shape of the Modern British Empire and Its Historiography’, *Historical Journal*, 53:02 (2010), 451; a prominent example of the trend is Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Hedinger and Heé, ‘Transimperial History’; Nadin Heé, ‘Transimperial Opportunities? Transcending the Nation in Imperial Formations’, *Comparativ*, 31 (2021), 631–639; Bernhard C Schär, ‘Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies: Towards a New Imperial History of Europe, c.1770–1850’, *Past & Present*, 257:1 (2022), 134–167; for discussion on earlier trends in global and transnational history, see also Gareth Curless et al., ‘Editors’ Introduction: Networks in Imperial History’, *Journal of World History*, 26:4 (2015), 705–732; C.A. Bayly et al., ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *American Historical Review*, 111:5 (2006), 1441–1464.

tended to remain closely tied up with national frameworks. As Simon J. Potter and Jonathan Saha wrote a decade ago about British historiography, “imperial historians ... have not explored links *between* empires as thoroughly as those *within* empires.”<sup>24</sup> Yet it is a blind spot that historians have increasingly sought to address, with the transimperial approach having been applied in recent years to topics as wide-ranging as slavery and abolition, colonial policing and warfare, environmental management, population politics, labour migrations and scientific networks.<sup>25</sup> Southeast Asia, with its long history of interconnections, provides especially fruitful grounds for charting these intricate flows of ideas, objects and people, as noted by H. Hazel Hahn.<sup>26</sup> This book seeks, for its part, to add to that conversation on the interconnections of empires, with tourism providing obviously felicitous subject matter for such a boundary-crossing analysis. Moreover, the specific region under consideration here is perfectly suited for this approach, being comprised of colonies ruled by variously competing and collaborating powers. Finally, the analysis here also addresses the relative lack of available literature on empire and

<sup>24</sup> Simon J. Potter and Jonathan Saha, ‘Global History, Imperial History and Connected Histories of Empire’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 16:1 (2015).

<sup>25</sup> Gunja SenGupta and Awam Amkpa, *Sojourners, Sultans, and Slaves: America and the Indian Ocean in the Age of Abolition and Empire* (University of California Press, 2023); Matilde Flamigni, “In Consequence of Considering Herself to Be Free”. Freedom and (Im)Mobility in the Trans-Imperial Caribbean Space of the 19th Century’, *Labor History*, 64:6 (2023), 676–690; Marleen Reichgelt and Felicity Jenz, ‘Papuan Children, Catholic Missionaries, and the Formation of Transimperial Networks in Late Nineteenth-Century Europe’, *Journal of World History*, 36:1 (2025), 85–119; Tom Menger, *The Colonial Way of War: Violence and Colonial Warfare in the British, German and Dutch Empires, c.1890–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2025); Nadin Heé, ‘Globalizing Japanese Tuna fisheries: Oceanic Sovereignty in the 20th Century Transimperial Indo-Pacific’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 78:2 (2023), 271–296; Ulrike Kirchberger, ‘Between Transimperial Networking and National Antagonism: German Scientists in the British Empire during the Long Nineteenth Century’, in Andrew Goss (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Science and Empire* (Routledge, 2021), 138–147; Claire Louise Blaser, Monique Ligtenberg, and Josephine Selander, ‘Introduction: Transimperial Webs of Knowledge at the Margins of Imperial Europe’, *Comparativ*, 31:5–6 (2021), 527–539; Tobias Wagemann, ‘Recruited for Colonial Order: Transimperial Perspectives on Police Recruitment in British and German New Guinea (1884–99)’, *Australian Historical Studies* (published online before print); Samuël Coghe, *Population Politics in the Tropics: Demography, Health and Transimperialism in Colonial Angola* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> H. Hazel Hahn, ‘Introduction’, in H. Hazel Hahn (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Exchange and the Colonial Imaginary: Global Encounters Via Southeast Asia* (NUS Press, 2019), 4–5; notable examples of global history approaches to Southeast Asia include Andrew J. Abalakin, “‘Sino-Pacific’: Conceptualizing Greater Southeast Asia as a Sub-Arena of World History”, *Journal of World History*, 22:4 (2011), 659–691; Lai Chee-Kien, ‘Beyond Colonial and National Frameworks’, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 63:2 (2010), 74–75; and the classic Victor Lieberman, ‘Local Integration and Eurasian Analogies: Structuring Southeast Asian History, c. 1350–c. 1830’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 27:3 (1993), 475–572.

travel in Southeast Asia, which has long been overshadowed as an object of study by its more prominent neighbours, China and India.<sup>27</sup>

To understand the genesis of colonial proto-tourism, it is first necessary to consider the history of Western tourism in the European and Anglo-American spheres. This history has been relatively well studied, even if the literature occasionally betrays its origin in the social sciences through an excessive focus on the concerns of today and a thin understanding of the historical roots of the phenomenon; the existing scholarship has also exhibited a notable nationalist and Anglo-centric bias, as noted by Zuelow, to which the global and transimperial focus here seeks to add a corrective.<sup>28</sup> The best available historical overviews of early tourism, such as James Buzard's *The Beaten Track*, carefully situate its emergence in wider societal and cultural developments, though generally outside of an imperial context.<sup>29</sup> The consensus view is that tourism emerged in Europe and Northern America at some point in the early nineteenth century, with a notable upturn from about 1815 onward as the political situation on the continent stabilised after the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars. The word itself, in English, dates from the late eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Early tourism is generally seen as having developed out of the Grand Tour of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while being distinguished from it by specific technological, cultural and demographic characteristics.<sup>31</sup> Firstly, the emergence of steam technology saw a notable increase in the comfort and regularity of travel:

<sup>27</sup> For example, Sachidananda Mohanty (ed.), *Travel Writing and the Empire* (Katha, 2003); Pramod K. Nayar, 'Marvelous Excesses: English Travel Writing and India, 1608–1727', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (2005), 213–238; Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840: 'From an Antique Land'* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Nicholas R. Clifford, *'A Truthful Impression of the Country': British and American Travel Writing in China, 1880–1949* (University of Michigan Press, 2001); Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn, *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s* (Hong Kong University Press, 2007); even volumes that include Southeast Asia tend to focus on South or East Asia, as for example Steve Clark and Paul Smethurst, *Asian Crossings: Travel Writing on China, Japan and Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong University Press, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Eric G.E. Zuelow, 'The Necessity of Touring Beyond the Nation: An Introduction', in Eric G.E. Zuelow (ed.), *Touring Beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism History* (Ashgate, 2011), 1–7.

<sup>29</sup> James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918* (Clarendon, 1993); Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (University of California Press, 1999); see also John Towner, *An Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World, 1540–1940* (Wiley, 1996); John K. Walton (ed.), *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity, and Conflict* (Channel View Publications, 2005); Hartmut Berghoff (ed.), *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000* (Palgrave, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 1, 19.

<sup>31</sup> The Grand Tour is often discussed as a primarily British phenomenon, but for studies on Dutch travel in the period, see Gerrit Verhoeven, *Europe within Reach: Netherlandish Travellers on the Grand Tour and Beyond (1585–1750)* (Brill, 2015); Gerrit Verhoeven, "'Een Divertissant Somertogje'": Transport

steamboats provided the conduits to some of the most important early tourist destinations, with lines from Britain and up the Seine opened in 1816, soon followed by the introduction of a regular service up the Rhine and to the popular German spa resorts in 1824.<sup>32</sup> To boats were added, from 1825 in Britain, the railways, which soon became symbolic of nineteenth-century tourism, harnessed by the famous travel agency Thomas Cook to the service of their package tours.<sup>33</sup> Culturally, tourism was driven by the contemporary ideas and ideals of Romanticism. The poet Lord Byron came to be seen as something of an ideal archetype of the modern traveller, both in the intense personal feeling of his writings and through his dramatic depictions of natural wilderness and sights like atmospheric ruins. Finally, demographically, nineteenth-century tourism was characterised by a decidedly middle-class profile of travellers, as opposed to the earlier Grand Tour which had mostly been undertaken by the upper, landed classes and the university-educated, as statistically shown by John Towner and Michael Heafford.<sup>34</sup>

These baseline technological, cultural and demographic characteristics of early European tourism had parallels in the emerging leisure travel in contemporary colonial Asia, as the following chapters will show. For a study of this kind there are few precedents, with the history of colonial tourism still heavily under-researched, although with a few notable recent exceptions.<sup>35</sup> Work on the colonial entanglements of twentieth-century tourism is expanding rapidly, with significant interventions dealing with topics as varied as the cyclo-tourism of Indian nationals as a form of anti-colonial expression, the African labour underpinning the construction of the Riviera as a dream destination, or the significance of cooling technologies for manipulating the colour line of Caribbean tourism.<sup>36</sup> As for the

Innovations and the Rise of Short-Term Pleasure Trips in the Low Countries, 1600–1750', *Journal of Transport History*, 30:1 (2009).

<sup>32</sup> L. Girard, 'Transport' in H.J. Habakkuk and M. Postan (eds), *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Vol. VI: *The Industrial Revolution and After, Part I* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), 225.

<sup>33</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 50–55.

<sup>34</sup> John Towner, 'The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12:3 (1985), 311; Michael Heafford, 'Between Grand Tour and Tourism: British Travellers to Switzerland in a Period of Transition, 1814–1860', *Journal of Transport History*, 27:1 (2006), 44.

<sup>35</sup> I have had the pleasure to witness some of this work first-hand as co-editor, with Andreas Greiner, of a 2024 special issue of the journal *Itinerario*. The introduction there collects some of our thoughts on the emerging field: Andreas Greiner & Mikko Toivanen, 'Colonial Baggage: An Introduction', *Itinerario: Journal of Imperial and Global Interactions*, 48:3 (2024), 223–234.

<sup>36</sup> Harald Fischer-Tiné and Souvik Naha, 'Man-Making and World-Making on Two Wheels: Indian "Globe Cyclists" in the Interwar Years', *Journal of Global History*, 19:3 (2024), 392–420; Stephen L. Harp, *The Riviera, Exposed: An Ecohistory of Postwar Tourism and North African Labor* (Cornell University Press, 2022); Elliott Sturtevant, 'Conditioning Tourism and Trade: Designs for Travel Aboard the Great White Fleet in the "American Tropics," 1899–1930', *Itinerario: Journal of Imperial and Global*

late nineteenth century, a particular emphasis of the literature has been on early European tourism in Egypt and the Middle East where, as noted by F. Robert Hunter, tourism quickly followed in the footsteps of European military and political control in the latter half of the century.<sup>37</sup>

Yet when it comes to the earlier, pre-Suez period, one generally has to settle for more superficial overviews or passing mentions rather than in-depth studies. The mid-century represents an awkward inflection point, when the early modern impulse for “exploring” the unknown lost much of its shine with the rapid advance of imperial frontiers and travel increasingly took on the aspect of a middle-class hobby rather than glorious adventure.<sup>38</sup> For British India, Nigel Leask has noted in passing how travel writers sought to emulate the styles of European tourist literature, especially in accounts of leisure tours undertaken by military men on leave – a genre that, as will be seen, was equally prominent on Ceylon and in Southeast Asia.<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere, David Arnold has similarly sketched the contours of a “routine” early Indian tourism from around 1850, facilitated by steam travel, a network of travellers’ bungalows and the increased accessibility of the inland regions brought about by administrative consolidation.<sup>40</sup> Relatedly, John MacKenzie has written on how British guidebooks opened the way into empire in the latter half of the century, notably discussing the first Murray handbook to India in 1859.<sup>41</sup> Further afield, Mark Carey has described the commodification of climate in Caribbean health tourism beginning in the 1850s, a process that had a close contemporary parallel in the spread of health resorts across maritime Southeast Asia, as will be seen.<sup>42</sup>

In the scholarship on travel in the Dutch Empire, the use of the tourist heuristic has remained even more limited, with the notable exception of a recent collection

*Interactions*, 48:3 (2024), 249–267. The Cornell University Press series *Histories and Cultures of Tourism*, edited by Eric G.E. Zuelow, is an important current venue for this line of work.

<sup>37</sup> F. Robert Hunter, ‘Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868–1914’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40:5 (2004), 28; see also Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Duke University Press, 1994); Martin Anderson, ‘The Development of British Tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850’, *Journal of Tourism History*, 4:3 (2012), 259–279.

<sup>38</sup> Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers’ World: Europe to the Pacific* (Harvard University Press, 2006), 12–13.

<sup>39</sup> Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 217–218.

<sup>40</sup> David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape, and Science, 1800–1856* (University of Washington Press, 2006), 18–20, 34.

<sup>41</sup> John M. MacKenzie, ‘Empire Travel Guides and the Imperial Mind-set from the Mid-Nineteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Centuries’, in Martin Farr and Xavier Guégan (eds), *The British Abroad since the Eighteenth Century, Volume 2: Experiencing Imperialism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 116–133.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Carey, ‘Inventing Caribbean Climates: How Science, Medicine, and Tourism Changed Tropical Weather from Deadly to Healthy’, *Osiris*, 26:1 (2011), 129–141.

edited by Rick Honings and Nick Tomberge.<sup>43</sup> Achmad Sunjayadi and Coen van 't Veer have, for their part, identified touristic styles in nineteenth-century colonial travelogues and novels, respectively, around the period under consideration here.<sup>44</sup> Peter van Zonneveld has noted the mid-century influx of Dutch travellers on Ceylon occasioned by steam shipping, while more obliquely, Alexander Bakker has pointed out how changing travel accounts reflected the progress of colonial expansion, with an increasing emphasis on European civilisational norms.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Susan Legêne has pointed out that the colonial travel accounts of the time served the needs of a unifying national narrative in post-Napoleonic Netherlands, an insight that certainly applies also to the works considered here.<sup>46</sup> Yet the phenomenon of early Dutch colonial tourism remains underexplored, not to mention that genuinely transimperial analyses remain almost nonexistent. This book seeks to move beyond such scattered observations on specific facets of travel and on individual would-be tourists and towards a deeper understanding of the spread of European tourist culture, as a large-scale phenomenon, into colonial spheres in the period of administrative and spatial consolidation around the middle of the century.

Building on the findings and insights of the scholars and works outlined above, this book makes an argument for the emergence of a novel kind of colonial proto-tourism in Java, Ceylon and the Straits Settlements during the period under discussion. This, to be sure, did not represent a fully mature tourist industry in the modern sense, neither as measured by profits made nor by the headcount of travellers: for that kind of fully-fledged mass tourism one needs to look forward

<sup>43</sup> Rick Honings and Nick Tomberge, 'Inleiding op het themanummer toerisme en kolonialisme', *De Moderne Tijd*, 8:3 (2024), 173–189, which builds partly on the dissertation version of this work.

<sup>44</sup> Achmad Sunjayadi, 'Between Tourist and Traveller: The Reverend Marius Buys in the Preanger (1887–1890)', *Wacana: Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*, 25:1 (2024), 92–93; Coen van 't Veer, 'Thrilling Fiction, Travel Guides and Spaces of Identity: Sea Voyages between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies in Novels and Short Stories, 1850–1940' in Doris Jedamski & Rick Honings (eds), *Travelling the Dutch East Indies: Historical Perspectives and Literary Representations* (Verloren, 2023), 114. These and many other promising contributions that have greatly diversified the field of travel writing studies on the Dutch East Indies, have arisen from work coordinated from the ongoing Voicing the Colony project at Leiden University, run by Rick Honings. For a synthesis of Honings's argument, see his *De ontdekking van Insulinde: op reis in Nederlands-Indië in de negentiende eeuw* (Prometheus, 2023).

<sup>45</sup> Peter van Zonneveld, 'Een Indisch paradijs, een Java in bescheidener vorm: Ceylon in reisverhalen uit de periode 1850–1900', *Indische Letteren*, 19:1 (2004), 35–45; Alexander Bakker, 'Van paradijs tot plantage: Beeldvorming van Nederlands-Indië in reisverslagen, 1816–1900', *Indische Letteren*, 13:2 (1998), 75–85.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Legêne, *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme* (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1998), 14, 394.

to events like the establishment of Thomas Cook's first India branch in Bombay in 1881, or even later to the setting up of an official tourist bureau in Batavia in 1908.<sup>47</sup> Instead, the proto-tourism investigated here was a socio-cultural phenomenon defined by the presence of various aspects and practices of contemporary European touristic travel, as identified above, within the looser framework of colonial travel. These characteristic aspects can broadly be divided into three categories: intent, infrastructure, and practices.

To start with intent, perhaps the most important of these aspects has to do with the motivation of travel as embodied in the notion of tourism as travel for pleasure, or, in Rudy Koshar's terms, as "any practice arising from an individual's voluntary movement between relatively permanent 'settledness' and an extended moment of leisured displacement."<sup>48</sup> As such, colonial proto-tourism is here defined as a cultural corollary of colonial settlement, a phenomenon made possible by the consolidation of colonial control that took place in the middle of the century. Accordingly, particular attention is given to the ways in which travel within the region was conceptualised as a pleasurable activity separate from working life. This kind of travel as leisure, requiring as it did some moderate means and stable employment, had a notably middle-class character, as the overview of author backgrounds in the following chapter will show; this, of course, was in line with the demographics of contemporary European tourism back home.<sup>49</sup> The particular forms that this kind of colonial leisure took were multiple, including so-called "invalid travel," that is, travel on leave for convalescence, and hunting excursions, an especially popular pastime in Ceylon; yet the quest to establish and normalise a cycle of alternation between work and leisure was important for each.<sup>50</sup>

Secondly, the proto-tourism examined here made extensive use of the regularity and affordability of new travel infrastructure. Many of the travellers discussed below stayed at hotels, which – as noted by Maurizio Peleggi – began to appear in the region's major cities around the middle of the century, and frequently

<sup>47</sup> Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (Secker & Warburg, 1991), 203; Robert Cribb, 'International Tourism in Java, 1900–1930', *South East Asia Research*, 3:2 (1995), 195–198.

<sup>48</sup> Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Berg, 2000), 8.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13.

<sup>50</sup> Leisure in colonial contexts, especially in the form of sports, has only recently broken through as an object of study in its own right, see for example Tiyaambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney, *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Africa World Press, 2003); Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Younghan Cho and Charles Leary, *Modern Sports in Asia* (Routledge, 2016); Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds), *Empire & Cricket: The South African Experience 1884–1914* (UNISA Press, 2009); Prashant Kidambi, *Cricket Country: An Indian Odyssey in the Age of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2019); Gerald R. Gems, *Sport and the American Occupation of the Philippines: Bats, Balls, and Bayonets* (Lexington Books, 2016).

described their accommodation experiences at length.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, steam shipping, in the form of regular mail steamers between major ports, greatly facilitated travel between the colonies of the region. The first P&O steamer arrived in Singapore in August 1845, and a regular service connected the city to Hong Kong on the one hand and Penang and Ceylon on the other.<sup>52</sup> This was immediately followed by the setting up of a monthly connection between Singapore and Batavia, run by the Dutch navy and carrying passengers as well as mail and cargo, providing a regular connection between the British and the Dutch possessions.<sup>53</sup> Without falling into the trap of technological determinism, it is apparent that the comfort and speed of steam travel favoured a touristic travel mindset, as also noted by Mark Carey for the Caribbean, and changed the experience of moving through space. And although most of the accounts examined here describe travel before extensive railway connections, several authors drew attention to the benefits of the various, recently introduced scheduled post-coach systems in the region, which in many ways presaged the comfort and regularity of train travel, as Robin Jarvis has argued for turn-of-the-century Britain.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, the colonial proto-tourism analysed here also shared several of the practices associated with contemporary European tourism. One notable example is the practice of sightseeing, as defining a feature of tourism in the nineteenth century as it is today and one that occupies a prominent place in many of the seminal analyses of modern tourism and the “tourist gaze”.<sup>55</sup> Many of the texts analysed in this book describe sightseeing routines and suggested routes from one site to another. Some of the authors self-consciously couched this in the tourist lingo of the time, such as Charles Walter Kinloch in listing “the lions of Penang”, “lion” being contemporary slang for a notable sight or attraction and a term frequently used in guidebooks like *Kidd’s New Guide to the “Lions” of London* (1832).<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the rise of sightseeing as an organised activity is intimately connected to the emergence of the guidebook genre, championed by publishers like John Murray and Baedeker

<sup>51</sup> Maurizio Peleggi, ‘The Social and Material Life of Colonial Hotels: Comfort Zones as Contact Zones in British Colombo and Singapore, ca. 1870–1930’, *Journal of Social History*, 46:1 (2012), 124–153.

<sup>52</sup> David Armine Howarth, Stephen Howarth, and Stephen Rabson, *The Story of P & O: The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995), 78.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Norbert Frans Marie à Campo, *Engines of Empire: Steamshipping and State Formation in Colonial Indonesia* (Verloren, 2002), 39–40.

<sup>54</sup> Robin Jarvis, ‘The Glory of Motion: De Quincey, Travel, and Romanticism’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 34 (2004), 76–77; a similar argument is made for Indian palanquins in Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze*, 20–1.

<sup>55</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn (Sage, 2002), 3; Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Charles Walter Kinloch, *De Zieke Reiziger: Or, Rambles in Java and the Straits. In 1852. By a Bengal Civilian* (Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1853), 132; William Kidd, *Kidd’s New Guide to the ‘Lions’ of London* (W. Kidd, 1832).

in the first half of the century and with the first titles for South and Southeast Asia dating from the 1850s.<sup>57</sup> Further practices characteristic of nineteenth-century tourism took the traveller away from cityscapes and into nature: these included vigorous and sportive activities such as hikes and mountaineering and visits to Alpine health resorts, as noted by Jill Steward.<sup>58</sup> Such pastimes, and especially the “medicalisation of leisure” discussed by Dane Kennedy, were quickly transposed into a colonial context and helped transform the colonisers’ relationship with the tropical environment, as discussed in chapter 2.<sup>59</sup>

Importantly, the notion of colonial proto-tourism developed here is not an imposition of anachronistic terminology into the past. The qualifier “proto” is necessitated by the development of modern tourism into a distinct, monolithic industry in later times, but many nineteenth-century commentators routinely used the language of tourism to refer to colonial travel at the time. James Campbell, in his *Adventures, Excursions and Field-Sports in Ceylon* (1843), was happy to compare himself to other “modern travellers and tourists,” while also warning a few pages later of the danger of having his favoured Ceylon overrun by “soulless tourists” in language not too far removed from the many recent think pieces on “over-tourism”.<sup>60</sup> Augustus de Butts, with whom we started this introduction, similarly commented in 1841 on locales on that island “most worthy of the notice of the tourist”; and we have already noted John Thomson’s comment on Ceylon being already, by 1875, fully explored by “modern tourists.”<sup>61</sup> The roots of tourism scholarship in the globalisation-informed sociological work of the 1990s have perhaps entrenched the idea of the phenomenon as a relatively recent one, whereas the language and many of its attendant discourses in fact date back to the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup>

The boom in colonial travel in the period was also noticed in administrative circles, as attested to by a letter from the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies to the minister of colonies in 1860, pointing out “the recently more and more observed desire to travel of foreigners of both Western and Eastern origin” and

<sup>57</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 76.

<sup>58</sup> Jill Steward, “‘On the Continent’: Britons Abroad and the ‘Business of Travel’, 1820–1914”, in Martin Farr and Xavier Guégan (eds), *The British Abroad since the Eighteenth Century, Volume 1: Travellers and Tourists* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 84–85.

<sup>59</sup> Dane Keith Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj* (University of California Press, 1996), 31.

<sup>60</sup> James Campbell, *Excursions, Adventures, and Field Sports in Ceylon; Its Commercial and Military Importance, and Numerous Advantages to the British Emigrant*. Vol. 1. (T. and W. Boone, 1843), 227, 245–246.

<sup>61</sup> De Butts, *Rambles in Ceylon*, 161; Thomson, *Straits of Malacca*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (University of California Press, 1999).

positing this as a reason to urgently reconsider existing travel regulations.<sup>63</sup> It was this request that apparently led to the relaxation of rules in 1861, mentioned above. That decision was justified in largely pragmatic terms at the time, the Council of State noting that earlier, stricter rules often went unobserved and that in any case European travellers would inevitably demand the same rights that Dutch citizens had.<sup>64</sup> Travel across colonial boundaries was therefore increasingly seen as a normal and uncontroversial aspect of colonial policy, a regular fact of colonial life – for those with the means to do it.

Understood as a set of practices within, and attitudes toward, the spaces travelled through, colonial travel was closely interconnected with contemporary discourses around race. The first half of the nineteenth century saw a change in racial norms in both the British and Dutch colonies of South and Southeast Asia. Some of this change was based on economics: as C.A. Bayly has noted on the Asian colonies of the British Empire, an increased focus on cash crops and revenues led to a harsh “peasantisation” or proletarianisation of the indigenous population.<sup>65</sup> A similar transformation occurred in the Dutch East Indies with the implementation of the cultivation system in the 1830s.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, white colonial society was also changing from within. Jean Gelman Taylor has shown that when the Netherlands reclaimed the East Indies in 1816 after the British interregnum of the Napoleonic Wars, the new corps of colonial officials represented a new type of coloniser, “born and educated in Holland” and free of the influence of Batavia’s Old Indies elites, often accompanied by European-born wives.<sup>67</sup>

This metropolitan contingent, supported by new laws that restricted access to officialdom to European-educated men, and the establishment in 1842 of the Royal Academy in Delft for the specific purpose of training said officialdom, came to dominate public culture in the colony. It did so to the detriment of the old mixed-race Indo-Dutch clans that had been building a powerbase on Java, partly based on their local expertise and language skills, for a long time.<sup>68</sup> Naturally, the change did not

<sup>63</sup> Letter nr. 258 (13 October 1860) in ‘Brieven van de gouverneur-generaal aan de minister van Koloniën’ (1859–1861), NA Den Haag, Ministerie van Koloniën 1850–1900 (2.10.02), inv. nr. 6531.

<sup>64</sup> Correspondence relating to decision nr. 40 (27 October 1861) in ‘Verbaal: wetten, Koninklijke besluiten, kabinetsbrieven, 26–31 October 1861, Kabinet des Konings (2.02.04), inv. nr. 1280.

<sup>65</sup> C.A. Bayly, ‘The British and Indigenous Peoples, 1760–1860: Power, Perception and Identity’ in M. J. Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 30.

<sup>66</sup> Ulbe Bosma and R. Raben, *Being “Dutch” in the Indies: A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500–1920* (NUS Press, 2008), 105.

<sup>67</sup> Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, 115.

<sup>68</sup> Heather Sutherland, ‘Treacherous Translators and Improvident Paupers: Perception and Practice in Dutch Makassar, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 53:1–2 (2010), 331–342.

occur overnight: there was a long period of transition from one regime to the other, as noted by Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, yet the direction of travel was clear.<sup>69</sup> Similar developments have been observed in British India, where Europeanness came to be seen as a dominant value and the Eurasian community became increasingly legally and culturally marginalised over the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup>

Quite apart from the practical details, an undeniable cultural shift was taking place in the public performance of race. Durba Ghosh has made the point eloquently, noting that “like British India, in Dutch Indonesia, the emergence of a public social order in which the European comportment dominated over native habits paralleled the consolidation of the colonial state’s power over its growing colony.”<sup>71</sup> The phenomenon of colonial tourism provides valuable material for understanding how this change in racial norms took place in practice, as seen from the perspective of the privileged traveller. The observations of colonial tourists, moving through colonised spaces at this moment of their transformation, provide a fascinating cross-cutting and regional snapshot of the structural and legislative changes of the time.

Beyond observation, the practices of tourism were directly constitutive of this new public culture of Europeanness, transposing a sense of metropolitan leisure and helping to hide potential sources of conflict.<sup>72</sup> Even without the fully controlled package-tour experience of the twentieth century with its exclusive expat enclaves, nineteenth-century proto-tourism provided a way to experience the colonies as extensions of Europe, as Martin Meade among others has described in his analysis of the hill stations of India where officials retreated to cherish “a complementary illusion of Europe and ‘home’ in the landscape of the Hills” and the architecture “reflected contemporary cottage and villa styles in British spa or seaside resorts, to which so many Anglo-Indians retired.”<sup>73</sup> The act of touring became a quest for home and travel writing a “domestication of the spaces of colonial Anglo-India”, in Éadaoin Agnew’s phrase, transporting “the idea of an ordered English society, with its embedded cultural values and codes, to the furthest corners of empire”.<sup>74</sup> Tourist

<sup>69</sup> Bosma and Raben, *Being “Dutch” in the Indies, 190–194*.

<sup>70</sup> Valerie Anderson, *Race and Power in British India: Anglo-Indians, Class and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (I.B. Tauris, 2015), 59–60.

<sup>71</sup> Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41; see also Damon Ieremia Salesa, *Racial Crossings: Race, Inter-marriage, and the Victorian British Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Aline Demay, *Tourism and Colonization in Indochina (1898–1939)* (Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Martin Meade, ‘The Anglo-Indian Bungalow’ in Catherine Weinberger-Thomas (ed.), *L’Inde et l’imaginaire* (École des hautes études et sciences sociales, 1988), 149.

<sup>74</sup> Éadaoin Agnew, ‘Relocating Domesticity: Letters from India by Lady Hariot Duferin’ in Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (eds), *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (Routledge, 2009), 96.

discourse did not merely reflect, but also actively reinforced this Europeanisation of colonial spaces.

Suspended between home and away, tourism was also characterised by a fundamental dualism of purpose as both a key vehicle of modernity and as an act of burrowing into the past and its traditions. As shown by James Buzard, tourism emerged out of a mixture of new technologies and demographic change, and the travel discourses it created were often borderline futurist, as exemplified by Charles Dickens's depiction of train travel: "[s]omething snorts for me, something shrieks for me, something proclaims to everything else that it had better keep out of my way, – and away I go."<sup>75</sup> His less famous Dutch contemporary C.H. Clemens conveyed the same sense of progress: "through gains in speed one wins time and space, and thereby the man of our century can see and enjoy more than in previous centuries."<sup>76</sup> At the same time, reflecting the cultural roots of tourism in Romanticism and perhaps also the legacy of the Grand Tour, tourists were from the very beginning interested in locales marked with history, or better yet, the authenticity of a place "*kept still*, out of history, suspended as if waiting for the visitor to make use of it".<sup>77</sup> This temporal split represents the dualism between the traveller and the local: the traveller heralding modernity and moved by the very forces of modernisation, while the local becomes the object of travel and the traveller's gaze, standing in for an imagined past, exotic, romantic or otherwise.

In the context of nineteenth-century colonies this division acquired a particular significance, as colonial society employed a touristic discourse both to normalise and legitimise the idea of the colonies as an extension of modern, European space, and to define local cultures and peoples as fundamentally different and un-modern. Indeed, many historians have examined the role of tourism in the creation of national imaginaries and narratives of nationhood in places like Brittany or Ireland.<sup>78</sup> While seemingly far removed from the colonial realities of mid-nineteenth-century South and Southeast Asia, that work has shown the role of tourism in determining how "local" culture comes to be constructed and packaged into a neatly defined product from the outside, in this case from the national capitals in Paris and Dublin. A crucial role in this framing was played by the tourist guide-books that did the work of narrating space for a travelling audience.<sup>79</sup> Similar discourses emerged in colonial or semi-colonial settings, so that for example the

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 44.

<sup>76</sup> C.H. Clemens, *Schetsen en verhalen uit de Rijn-provinciën* (Hendrik Frulink, 1840), 96.

<sup>77</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 179.

<sup>78</sup> Patrick Young, *Enacting Brittany: Tourism and Culture in Provincial France, 1871–1939* (Ashgate, 2012); Eric G.E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse University Press, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> Young, *Enacting Brittany*, 55–56.

Habsburg administration actively endorsed international tourism in Bosnia as a means to legitimise their rule over the previously Ottoman territory, distracting attention from potential conflict by playing up the aesthetic orientalism of the area; and the fascist state in Italy used colonial tourism as a means to popularise and legitimise its own empire.<sup>80</sup> Tourism, then, has always been used by those in power to differentiate between peoples and places and to create narratives about those they rule over, legitimising the fact of their dominance through the seemingly innocent subject matter of leisure.

### Structure of the book

The five chapters of this book are organised thematically, with each one focusing on a different aspect of either colonial travel writing or the colonial travel experience itself. Chapter 1 will begin by outlining the genre of popular colonial travel writing and its cultural context, providing an overview of the kinds of books that constituted it and the authors that engaged in writing it, while introducing the corpus of twenty-two works that form the basis of the analysis. From there, the discussion moves from the form to the content, with chapter 2 devoted to an analysis of how the authors thought about the colonies they travelled through as natural environments, and what role they ascribed to landscapes and non-human life in their representation of those places. In chapter 3, the focus turns to architectures of power and the constructed environments that framed European life in the colonies, for tourists as well as residents, while also considering the place of ancient Asian architecture in tourist imaginaries. Chapter 4 provides a critical reading of the human element of colonialism, offering an analysis of colonial travel as social experience, a series of interpersonal encounters sketching the contours of evolving social and racial hierarchies. And finally, chapter 5 pulls back from such in-depth content analysis to assess the structural and stylistic devices, the conventions and rules that gave the genre coherence and the way they shaped, in turn, the experiences of travel. There were strategies at play that prioritised certain kinds of travel over others, choices that narrowed down the range of possible encounters and, ultimately, shaped the culture of European colonialism.

Published travel accounts, such as those analysed here, provided an easily digestible narrative of European colonialism, but evidently a biased and skewed one that requires careful unpicking. It was an idealised, programmatic representation

<sup>80</sup> Edin Hajdarpasic, *Whose Bosnia? Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840–1914* (Cornell University Press, 2015), 189–192; David Atkinson, 'Constructing Italian African: Geography and Geopolitics' in Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller (eds), *Italian Colonialism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 22.

of a specific vision of colonial life, constituting an attempt – conscious or otherwise – to disseminate that ideal not only within the colonies but also to the audience reading these books back in Europe. This book analyses how the projection of that homely and controlled ideal related to concrete changes happening on the ground, studying colonisation both as a social phenomenon, determined through interactions based on class, nationality and mobility, and as a cultural product, interpreted and processed for popular consumption and a European audience. Travel writing, then, is used here both to examine the phenomenon of colonial travel, and to critically interrogate broader facets of colonisation and of colonial society as they revealed themselves through this specific corpus of sources.

For this purpose, the genre has several advantages over other, more stationary kinds of texts produced in colonial settings. Evidently, it has a personality and intimacy missing from official documentation; its timescales – usually in the order of weeks or months – and rhythms built around daily routines such as meals and sleep provide a more immediate and lived-in glimpse of colonial realities than memoirs constructed years or even decades later. And finally, the fact that these are all published works, rather than, say, personal diaries or correspondence, means that it is possible to trace the process that led to publication, and the response each work generated, and therefore to examine wider questions about the representation and interpretation of colonialism and colonisation at the time on a cultural rather than merely individual level. Their popular nature helps us see how empire was seen by larger audiences in Europe, and how the colonial middle classes themselves sought to represent it – and through it, themselves.

All the chapters that follow will draw on examples from all three areas outlined above, i.e. Java, the Straits Settlements and Ceylon, but naturally some of these provide more material for specific themes than others. No attempt is made to discuss every relevant theme or topic contained in these books, which in any case would be a hopeless endeavour; rather, a series of representative case studies have been selected to elucidate the main arguments. Therefore, for example, the focus in chapter 2, on the natural environment, falls primarily on Java and Ceylon, with their greater size and hinterlands; the Straits Settlements, and especially Singapore with its rapid growth and urbanisation, becomes more prominent in chapter 3, which focuses on architecture and infrastructure; chapter 4, dealing with the social life of the colonising middle classes, draws on all the colonies equally, although primarily on scenes from their primary settlements, i.e. Batavia, Colombo and Singapore. Throughout, the analysis will consider the various British and Dutch works not as separate categories of literature but as one singular and transimperial genre of travel writing, with shared imageries and vocabularies.