CHAPTER ONE

Empire and mobility: an introduction

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‘And so Phileas Fogg had won his bet.’ The protagonist of Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days*, the well-to-do English gentleman, Phileas Fogg, had wagered his acquaintances at the Reform Club £20,000 that he could undertake an unprecedented circumnavigation from London to Suez, Bombay, Calcutta, Hong Kong, Yokohama, San Francisco, New York and back to London within eighty days. ‘To do so’, Verne explained, ‘he had used all possible means of transport: steamships, trains, carriages, yachts, commercial vessels, a sledge and an elephant.’ Yet, although Fogg’s winnings were cancelled out by the costs of his peregrination, he had acquired a ‘charming wife’, Mrs Aouda, along the way. Originally serialised in French in 1872 and published in English two years later, Verne’s story unfolded in real time and gripped contemporary audiences. The journey at its centre had been made possible by a series of recent developments in transport infrastructure – the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad across the USA (1869) and the linking of railways in the Indian sub-continent (1870) – as well as by longer-established improvements in transport technologies associated with the application of steam power. Exemplifying how life imitates art, the story also inspired real-world travellers to try to match and even beat Fogg’s fictional accomplishment.

Unlike the more fantastical forms of transport that featured in Verne’s *Extraordinary Journeys*, starting in 1863 with *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, Fogg circumnavigated the globe using familiar modes such as steam trains, sailing ships and animal power. *Around the World in Eighty Days* also differs from some of Verne’s other works in that it does not involve a journey to an ‘unknown’ part of the world. As Brian Aldiss puts it: Fogg ‘forges no new pathways; he travels well-known routes, since his objective is to defeat not space but time’.
obviously concerned with colonial themes – be it the metaphorical treatment of (Western) colonisation in *The Mysterious Island* or a focus on an implacable enemy of terrestrial empires, Captain Nemo, who first appears in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* – *Around the World in Eighty Days* is about ‘empire’ nonetheless. 4 The novel is a partial tour of the current (and former) British Empire, complete with brief sketches and potted histories of Aden, British India, the Andaman Islands, Singapore and Hong Kong, as well as a journey across the USA. As Fogg’s party travel to Allahabad by elephant, they disrupt a *sati* ceremony and make a chivalrous rescue of the young Indian widow, Mrs Aouda, who will later become Fogg’s wife, thus enacting one of the central justifications for the British colonisation of India. Other imperial themes appear elsewhere in the story: the Hong Kong opium den full of ‘emaciated, stupefied wretches’ in which Fogg’s manservant Passepartout is drugged is an Orientalist set-piece, while the attack as the party travel on the Union Pacific Railroad by a band of Sioux warriors, who ‘swarmed’ onto the train like ‘enraged monkeys’, evokes commonplace Western ideas about race in the late nineteenth century. 5 Moreover, the specific mobilities and immobilities that Fogg and his companions encounter, including the drugged Mrs Aouda upon the funeral pyre, the befuddled opium addicts in Hong Kong and the agile Sioux warriors, also evoke wider imperial movements, whether of reformist sentiment or the antagonistic relationship between Euro-American settlement and indigenous peoples.

Most broadly, *Around the World in Eighty Days* is about how the world’s mobilities were being remade by Anglo-imperial hegemony, a ‘paean to the speeding up of the human world’ that was produced by the ‘global interlocking passenger transport systems’ of the Victorian era. 6 It is also a portrait of an English protagonist whose qualities were ideal for travelling across this world and for the business of empire-making. Phlegmatic, precise and stiff-upper-lipped, Fogg possesses ‘better knowledge than anyone else of world geography’ and the mathematical precision with which he travels from one place to another mirrors his machinelike character. 7 He is also willing and able to spend money and commit acts of violence to achieve his aims; his rescue of Passepartout from the Sioux raiders was described by Verne as an act in which ‘Phileas Fogg quite simply does his duty’. 8 Fogg is, then, an arch-imperialist, mastering all he surveys with a dispassionate composure. As such, Verne’s story is concerned both with the imperial (re)making of time and space, and with the actions of an imperial subject.

The themes of movement and travel that are central to Verne’s story also serve to articulate its underlying imperial themes. Our argument in *Empire and Mobility* is that a thorough engagement with questions
EMPIRE AND MOBILITY: AN INTRODUCTION

of mobility – and immobility – has much to offer to the study of empire more broadly, and not merely in terms of transport technologies and infrastructures, but also the cultures, discourses, practices and subjectivities with which they are associated. As such, this book is intended to serve as the first wide-ranging collection exploring the intersection of scholarly debates on imperial relations, colonialism and empire, with work on mobility and cultures of movement. In this introductory chapter we will outline why the foregrounding of a critical perspective on mobility and movement can reinvigorate histories of imperialism, outlining the different practices, subjects and things which have moved or have enabled or constrained imperial mobilities. As such, this chapter will set out the interdisciplinary, conceptual and historical context for the volume, as well as introduce the chapters that follow.

Movement, migration, travel and empire

While this collection makes an argument for the value of an explicit and conceptually informed focus on mobility and immobility within work on empire, themes of movement, flow and circulation have not been absent from the field. A work like Valeska Huber’s *Channelling Mobilities*, with its multi-scalar analysis of the multiple forms of movement associated with the Suez Canal, was among the most explicit moves in this direction (albeit one framed as global, rather than imperial, history), but there have been wider developments too. For example, recent work on empire and metropolitan culture – as embodied in the ‘Studies in Imperialism’ series of which *Empire and Mobility* is part – includes recent books such as Markku Hokkanen’s *Medicine, Mobility and the Empire*. Likewise, themes of flow and circulation have been apparent in research on empire informed by postcolonial approaches. In *Moving Subjects*, for example, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton make an explicit call for a ‘kinetic model’ of imperial space to be used to examine the intimate collisions and collusions between ‘mobile subjects’. In briefly reviewing existing work that anticipates or is broadly compatible with a more overt focus on the theme of mobility, our intention is not simply to acknowledge what has gone before, but to identify familiar starting points from which scholars unacquainted with these ideas might strike out.

Andrew Thompson argues that a ‘raison d’être of empire lay in the constant shifting of people between different parts of the world in ways that were likely to destabilise old identities and forge new ones’. Indeed, migration has been the most significant theme related to movement in histories of imperialism, be it its causes and especially
its consequences for non-metropolitan regions, or the role of population flows in the creation of settler societies and colonial enclaves. Complementing overviews and syntheses have been case studies of particular groups of migrants and specific destinations. In this way, the relationship between migration and facets of identity such as ethnicity, gender and religion have been examined, bringing greater precision to or complicating broader accounts. The role of the imperial state and non-state institutions in promoting, supporting and regulating emigration, such as churches and philanthropic organisations, has also received attention, as have migratory phenomena that are sometimes overlooked, such as that to the imperial centre from elsewhere and return migration from the empire.

Imperial migration was not only a matter of voluntary population movements, as the histories of transportation and convict labour demonstrate. The trans-Atlantic slave trade, which saw more than 12 million African men, women and children forcibly transported to European colonies and their successor states in the Americas from the sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, is the most infamous example. Its shifting patterns are now understood better than ever before due to the information available from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database – though the quantitative enumeration of this coercive mass mobility can leave its individual or experiential dimensions obscure. The involvement of different empires and states in trans-Atlantic slave trading ended in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. Yet, similar forms of movement emerged in the wake of abolition, particularly that of indentured Indian and Chinese workers brought to labour in the Caribbean and other tropical colonies. The destinations for enslaved and indentured labourers were plantation colonies, where they were subject to restrictions on their movement, a reminder that mobility and immobility were often entwined. Indeed, recent work on the efforts by the British state to suppress the slave trade demonstrates that the attempt to end one type of mobility could bring about new forms, whether those of the British naval personnel who served in the West African Squadron or of the ‘Liberated Africans’ seized from slave ships who were subsequently landed at Sierra Leone or St Helena, some of whom were then recruited to work as free labour in the Caribbean or serve in the British military units of the West India Regiments. Such work underscores the ‘multiple mobilities’ to which Huber has urged global and imperial historians to attend.

As well as settlement or long-term migration, trans-imperial mobility was also characterised by more temporary forms of movement. These included royal tours made by European monarchs to their colonies, as well as by their representatives, such as viceroys and
EMPIRE AND MOBILITY: AN INTRODUCTION

colonial governors, but also by the indigenous rulers to Europe. Such elite forms of mobility could be highly significant in cultural and political terms, and much attention has been given to their pageantry and surrounding symbolism.\(^{21}\) However, most movements across empire were not so elevated. They included movements by junior officials and administrators in the colonial bureaucracy, as well as all manner of others, from town planners and foresters, to soldiers and sailors.\(^{22}\) Other forms of movement took place against the backdrop of empire, if not always directly in its service. These were undertaken by explorers, missionaries and scientists, and, as the nineteenth century wore on and travel became more routine, they were joined by tourists.\(^ {23}\) Unsurprisingly, travel has been a persistent theme in work on empire, not least the role played by travel writing in the articulation of colonial discourses of difference.\(^ {24}\) Of course, it was not only Europeans who moved across empires, and while many accounts of non-European mobilities have been in aggregate, more individuated studies are increasingly common.\(^ {25}\) This relates to a wider shift toward biographically orientated work in order to explore the subjective experience of trans-imperial movement.\(^ {26}\) Within studies of imperial migration, a persistent concern has been with the encounters that occurred between people in different places. While often moments of conquest and violent imposition, they were sometimes characterised by resistance and failed efforts to impose metropolitan patterns on the sites of colonisation. Such encounters could also have transformative effects on migrant populations themselves. The interplay of encounter as a locus of imposition and resistance, preservation and change in cultural-historical work on empire has been explored through concepts such as ‘transculturation’, ‘creolisation’ and ‘hybridity’.\(^ {27}\) The notion of ‘diaspora’, though more prominent in postcolonial studies than imperial history \textit{per se}, is perhaps the dominant one, be it the ‘black’ diaspora created by the trans-Atlantic slave trade or the ‘green’ diaspora associated with Irish emigration, both forced and voluntary.\(^ {28}\) Accounts of singular diasporas have also been replaced by more complex histories of the interplay of multiple ethnicities, both ‘foreign’ and ‘indigenous’, dominant and subaltern, in specific colonial sites.\(^ {29}\) Finally, it is important to recognise that imperial encounters with unfamiliar lands and their inhabitants did not only occur \textit{after} migratory arrivals. Geographical imaginations about distant sites, including the opportunities they might offer to settlers – many of which were utterly misinformed and based on wishful thinking – were also forged prior to emigration.\(^ {30}\) As well as the mobilities of people, including the ideas they expressed and the identities they articulated, the movement of commodities and
goods has also been central to much work in imperial history. Such mobilities are sometimes assumed to be an intrinsic aspect of long-distance trade and thus not always addressed directly, but there has also been a rise of more explicit treatments focusing on the circulation of individual commodities – albeit sometimes under the sign of global rather than imperial history.  

Objects also moved across empires for reasons other than trade, though economic motives often remained central. For example, there were specimens and artefacts associated with scientific expeditions and exchange. Their circulations were central to the establishment of scientific ideas that drew authority from the collection, organisation and analysis of human remains and artefacts, as well as their display in museums and other sites. Such topics have been of major concern to historians of science and empire.  

The collection and transference of objects to the imperial centre were also associated with practices such as hunting, looting or the seizure of war reparations, while others were simply purchased as souvenirs, something entwined with the development of leisured travel and tourism.  

While collecting was central to the movement of objects, artistic and visual practices such as sketching, painting or photography represented ways in which the likenesses of objects could travel – in other physical forms, of course, such as the sketchbook, journal or album – be it in the service of science or as an adjunct to travel. Imperial mobilities also involved the circulation of news, information, ideas and knowledge through networks of communication. While these might be described as ‘intangible’, they were only able to occur by virtue of physical infrastructures, including railways, roads and bridges; overland and submarine telegraphic cables; ports and stations; as well as the vehicles that used them. Transportation has been a long-established area of historical research, especially the mechanised and industrialised forms that came to the fore in the nineteenth century. Historians of empire have particularly focused on trains, steamships and latterly aircraft, as well as the companies that operated them, which were significant agents of imperialism. Such work encompasses both more traditional concerns in transport history, including technology and logistics, as well as questions around popular understanding of new forms of mobility and the ‘imperial culture’ associated with specific modes of transport. There has also been a shift from viewing transport as a means of movement from point to point, to examining the practices and spaces associated with being ‘in transit’ and the experiences and encounters entailed in such movements. As such – and, as will be discussed in the next section, this has been a central argument within Mobility Studies more broadly – travel should not simply be understood
as movement or displacement between departure and arrival points. Histories of static imperial infrastructures are comparatively less well developed than those of mobile vehicle technologies, as evident in the greater focus on trains, ships and aeroplanes, than harbours, coaling stations and airfields. Nonetheless, the infrastructures that enabled movement are receiving more attention and serve as a reminder that mobilities and immobilities were entangled in complex ways at different sites and at different scales.

It is evident that movements of people, objects and ideas from place to place, enabled by systems of transport and communication, and impacting on and being changed by their destinations, have been significant themes within work on the history of empire. Partly driven by a desire to contribute a historical understanding of the globalised world, as well as the ubiquity of the vocabulary associated with this present moment, historians have sought to characterise historical flows and the resultant interactions using a language of ‘webs’ and ‘networks’ in order to bring the imperial centre and periphery into a ‘single analytic field’ and to explore the complex ‘circuitry’ of empire. Such concepts have been most explicit in the ‘New Imperial History’, in part because of the more self-conscious spatiality that has characterised this field.

A different conceptual framework that nonetheless stresses the large-scale spaces produced by circulations and flows is provided by the notion of ‘worlds’. Oceanic Worlds – initially the Atlantic World, but subsequently the Indian and Pacific Worlds – have become increasingly common objects of study, though again they are more likely aligned with global history. In contrast, the concept of the ‘British World’, which is more closely associated with imperial history, tends to be conceived endogenously, that is defined by common ‘cultural connections and identities’ rather than geographically defined communication systems that usually provide the foundation for oceanic ontologies.

Whatever their specificities, these spatial conceptualisations share a common focus on circulation and flow, which has led some critics to express concern that there has been an overemphasis on connections and entanglements at the expense of breakages, blockages and disconnections. This is one area where Mobility Studies has much to offer in that it has foregrounded the need to account not only for movement and flow, but also to understand the forces that produce or prevent movements, and the materialities and ‘moorings’ that enable or constrain mobilities. Thus, while the theme of movement is far from new in histories of empire, our argument here is that there is something to be gained by a more explicit conceptualisation of mobility.
Mobility studies and mobility history

Imperial histories are replete then with accounts of mobility, displacement and communication of different kinds, but for many historians the primary focus is not in understanding the distinctive qualities of particular movements, but in examining the subjects and objects who move, and the social and cultural contexts underpinning these events. As a result, mobility is all too often approached by historians and others as a simple displacement between two points, and this fairly straightforward critical observation has underpinned a number of attempts to theorise and ‘centre’ movement and mobility in the social sciences and humanities. In his influential book *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*, Tim Cresswell suggested that while movement is frequently taken to be an abstract and easily quantifiable displacement, movements are caught in complex webs or constellations of power, they produce distinctive sensations and meanings, and they therefore generate social, political, economic, cultural and environmental geographies and histories that academics should expose and trace. As we have noted, historians of empire have already undertaken much work in this regard, and important research has been completed by scholars of imperial history, travel writing, transport history, media history and migration studies on the geographies and histories of mobility. Nevertheless, in the late 1990s and early 2000s a number of scholars working in cultural geography, sociology and anthropology began advancing more critical and theoretical approaches to mobility and movement underpinned by social and cultural theory. What emerged was the fairly amorphous and plural but tightly networked multi-disciplinary field of Mobility Studies, which now boasts at least three journals, a handbook, a textbook, several research centres, networks and book series, and a large number of monographs and edited collections. This field now extends well beyond geography, sociology, anthropology, transport studies and other social science disciplines, to include scholars who explicitly align themselves with the arts and humanities in fields such as literary and cultural studies, media studies, art and design, architecture, archaeology, history, film studies and philosophy. Scholars in long-established fields such as transport history, migration studies, media studies and transport studies have also started to reframe their work through the approaches and conceptual frames developed by mobility scholars, with a number of transport historians actively aligning themselves with an expanded mobility history which focuses on the embodied practices and experiences associated with different kinds of
movement, instead of (or as well as) the infrastructures or technologies that arguably underpin or enable such practices. 49

With the forging of a new and diverse multi-disciplinary field, it is perhaps no surprise that conceptual and theoretical approaches to mobility reflect the breadth of approaches, theories, methods and interests pursued by those scholars. Theoretical ideas associated with feminism, Marxism, phenomenology, queer theory, post-colonialism, literary theory, visual culture, post-structuralist and non-representational theories, science and technology studies, new materialisms and much more have been deployed in studies by mobility scholars. 50 Mobility scholars have drawn upon a wide array of methods in their research, from interviews, focus groups, ethnography and participant observation, to archival research, textual analysis and experimental mobile methods. 51 Attention has been paid to the distinctive materialities, spaces, qualities and events associated with different mobile subjects, objects, technologies and environments. There has been a focus on how mobile bodies are frequently marked, differentiated and (im)mobilised along lines of gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, class and economic status. Research has been undertaken on the politics of enabling, enacting, regulating and producing different mobilities, examining questions of security, territoriality, sovereignty, military strategy, border control, bio-politics, social and political capital, exclusion, affect, identity and surveillance. 52

One key focus of mobility scholars has been mobility infrastructures and environments, with the sociologist John Urry emphasising that movements or mobilities are reliant upon relatively static infrastructures or ‘moorings’ to enable them to occur. 53 While this broad interest in infrastructure builds upon previous work on transport technologies that was shaped by Science and Technology Studies (STS) and the history of science and technology, 54 more recent scholarship goes much further, adopting a more ‘lively’ approach to the politics and poetics of mobility infrastructures. 55 A broad focus on mobility systems and mobility environments has also led to a ‘de-centring’ of the vehicle and attention given to the different subjects, objects, ecologies and socio-political structures which are important for the enactment of movements of various kinds. Important work has also been undertaken by mobility scholars on the elemental and atmospheric forces and events which may shape or influence mobility practices, including the elemental geographies of air and water. 56 Maritime historians and historians of science will be all too familiar with shifting understandings of such elemental forces, but there is further research that can be undertaken to explore the synergies between historical
research on practices of mobility and navigation, and some of the more recent ‘new materialist’ approaches to the hybrid or more-than-human geographies of elemental assemblages.  

Related to this concern with the materialities of mobility systems and the infrastructural practices and relations associated with them, is a concern with theorising the socio-spatial configurations of mobility systems. Cresswell and Urry have variously argued that mobility ‘systems’ or ‘networks’ are complex, hybrid, relational ‘constellations’, ‘assemblages’ or ‘networks’ formed through the gathering practices of interrelated materials, technologies, environments and bodies. There are clear resonances here with imperial histories which have drawn upon actor-network theories (ANT) to understand the role of communicative technologies and mobile material things in constituting or performing imperialism. Following Cresswell, we might argue that there have – at different moments in time, and in different geographical contexts – been distinctive imperial ‘constellations of mobility’, namely ‘historically and geographically specific formations of movements, narratives about mobility and mobile practices’ which both actively constitute and dismantle empires in an ongoing, performative manner. Indeed, the circumnavigation of Phileas Fogg, as fictionalised by Verne, could be seen as an articulation of a particular mid-to-late-nineteenth-century constellation of mobility.

Within the humanities and social sciences, movement, circulation and communication are frequently taken to occur in relation to bodies ‘between’ places, and this focus on practices that unfold ‘in-between’ – as well as the practical movements entailed in becoming something, somewhere, at some point in time – has led many mobility scholars to reflect on the importance of becoming and between-ness to understanding experiences of mobility. This move may, in turn, allow scholars to attempt to overcome binaries of mobility/immobility and place/non-place. Whereas a long line of geographers and anthropologists have characterised certain movements as antithetical to notions of place – and it has been argued that movements generate ‘non-places’ and ‘placelessness’, and that ‘place is pause’ – it is more common in contemporary mobility and geographical scholarship to characterise places as dynamic, open and in process, with movements shaping places and with all places being, in a sense, in movement and flux. Meaningful and highly politicised actions and events occur in the spaces of transportation and communication ‘between’ conventional, named, seemingly bounded places, demonstrating how the spaces and qualities of the ‘passage’ have rich geographies, aerographies and oceanographies.
Bodies and embodied practices have formed a central focus for mobility scholars and mobility historians seeking to understand the complex meanings, sensations and power relations associated with different forms of movement. Mobile subjects sense and inhabit the world through highly distinctive, variegated embodied practices, and mobility scholars have very purposefully utilised and experimented with an array of embodied, participative, phenomenological and mobile methods in an attempt to apprehend such experiences and sensations in new and creative ways. Historians of empire and mobility do not have the option of advancing new ways to move along with (or be with) their research subjects, although critical reflection upon the politics of the archive and the question of which movements and experiences get recorded and archived (and why), remain important issues. Despite proclamations by key advocates of mobile methods and non-representational methods that they are essential for capturing fleeting practices and experiences, there is no doubt that documentary and archival records and personal written accounts do provide important sources through which past embodied mobile practices, sensations and experiences can be analysed and understood.

Bodies move in different ways, exerting forces which may be registered across different scales. Mobility scholars have examined how embodied movements occur at the scale of the body – through looks, gestures and expressive movements such as dance – as well as through displacements, actions and transportations which are registered at the local, regional, national, imperial or global scale. Micro-scale embodied movements can be just as meaningful, powerful and politicised as movements spanning great distances, and mobilities scholarship suggests that we can and should analyse all of these different movements in similar ways, even if they are treated quite separately by scholars in different disciplines. Imperial movements and circulations have, of course, generated an innumerable number of culturally, economically and politically significant encounters and interactions, and the micro-scale bodily movements of a range of different groups and individuals have been interpreted as exotic, strange, unnatural, primitive, threatening, passive, immoral and wonderful by observers. Different embodied movements thus become caught up in all manner of scholarly and political debates, including those justifying colonialism, slavery and imperial scientific study. One example, from the mid-to-late nineteenth century, would be how the embodied movements, gestures, behaviours and customs of encountered and colonised peoples became interpreted through the overlapping lenses of racial science and climate science. Another example, from early twentieth-century Britain, would be how Black American dance forms
such as the ‘shimmy’ and Black American jazz music were labelled by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing as potential threats to standard ballroom dancing, leading to ‘degenerate dancing’ and the proliferation of ‘inappropriate’ forms of embodied dance movement across Britain and its empire.  

Both involved the categorisation and management of racialised moving bodies, with one being widely discussed in historical and geographical literatures on empire, and the other by a scholar working at the forefront of Mobility Studies.

**Mobile histories and geographies of the British Empire**

The chapters in this collection explore the themes of mobility and immobility in the context of the British Empire from the mid-to-late eighteenth century to the interwar period. As such, they encompass the break-up of the ‘First’ British Empire brought on by the subsequent American Revolution; the development and expansion of the ‘Second’ British Empire of settler colonies, India and the dependent empire, as well as the ‘informal’ empire beyond; and the changes that occurred in the aftermath of the First World War, including the acquisition of new colonies and mandates from Germany and the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific. While the political and constitutional changes associated with what is sometimes termed the ‘Third’ British Empire are not the focus of this collection, this period witnessed the increasing impact of new imperial mobilities, especially those associated with aviation.  

In sum, the chronological perspective we adopt here is of a very ‘long’ nineteenth century prior to the onset of the post-1945 phase of globalisation, a period characterised by increases in the speed, scale and size of flows of people, goods and information that have been variously described through such terms as ‘time-space compression’ and the ‘shrinking’ of the world.  

Moreover, though focused on the British context, the conceptual arguments presented here are of wider relevance, while the substantive case studies offer useful comparative material for other imperial settings.

Considering the historical-geographical context addressed in this collection, a series of central themes relating to imperial mobilities can be identified. First, there were the *population flows*. Emigration from the British Isles to the empire was a persistent theme in this period, with more than 22 million Britons emigrating between 1815 and 1914. Although the USA remained the overwhelmingly popular destination for migrants from the British Isles, there was a steady stream to British North America, while the colonies of Australia and New Zealand attracted interest with the discovery of gold in the 1850s and 1860s. In addition to voluntary white migration, some 148,000
EMPIRE AND MOBILITY: AN INTRODUCTION

convicts were transported to the colonies from 1788 to 1853. There was also migration within the tropical world, which was ‘strongly linked to the development of new colonies and subsidized European emigration in the southern hemisphere’. The trans-Atlantic slave trade dominated such flows before 1807, with almost a million enslaved people taken from Africa bound for Britain’s colonies in the final three decades of its involvement in the trade; thereafter, the Abolition Act diverted the trade to non-British territories such as Brazil and Cuba. In the decades after abolition, most tropical migration in the British Empire was to augment the labouring populations in the plantation colonies of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean. This included the indentureship of mainly Indian labourers from 1838 to 1917. Furthermore, 177,000 ‘Liberated Africans’ were also released from 2,000 slave ships by the Royal Navy between 1808 and 1863, and were settled in West Africa, at Sierra Leone, and the British Caribbean. However, after 1860 most tropical migration was to plantation colonies where slavery had never existed or to work on the construction of railways and mines elsewhere. Our very long nineteenth century also saw changing debates about mass emigration from Britain: did it represent a loss of ‘manpower’ to the metropole or was it a vital safety valve during periods of economic downturn? Should movement to the settler colonies be guided by the imperial state or left to individuals and private organisations? New regulatory measures were introduced too, often grounded in racial discourse, such as the restrictions placed by Australian colonies on Chinese emigration from the 1850s. In addition to the large-scale population flows, the period also witnessed the emergence of other forms of mobility that took place in the context of imperialism. From the mid-nineteenth century, for example, travel became a leisured activity for the privileged few at least, facilitated by the availability of guide books and the creation of tour companies. Indeed, in 1872, the year that Around the World in Eighty Days was originally serialised in French, Thomas Cook advertised the first tourist trip around the globe.

Second, the population flows of the long nineteenth century, especially from the 1850s onwards, were greatly facilitated by changes in communication technologies. While we want to resist too easily equating histories of mobility with those of transport, the significant changes were enabled by new technologies, particularly the mechanisation and industrialisation of mass movement. The approach we advocate here seeks not to fetishise the invention of particular technologies, but rather to attend to their geographically uneven effects. For example, while the first successful steam locomotives were in use by the end of the 1820s, the impact of railways in ‘shrinking’ the world
was negligible until the final decades of the century: prior to 1870 it was only in Egypt, between Alexandria and Suez, and in the USA, following the completion of the first Pacific railroad, that railways were of more than local importance. Steamships were of greater significance earlier on, though here too, the shift from sail to steam should not be exaggerated. Ocean routes operated from the 1830s and 1840s by companies such as Pacific & Orient, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and the Pacific Steam Navigation Company were particularly important in connecting Britain with its overseas possessions, making the steamship the most significant ‘tool’ of empire. Indeed, transport technologies also enabled new ways of projecting imperial power, such as the shore bombardments and riverine expeditions that were central to gunboat diplomacy.

Changes in transport technologies in this period were associated not only with new forms of powered mobility, but also with new infrastructures. The Suez and Panama canals, opened in 1869 and 1914 respectively, are among the most famous examples from this period, though their impact should not be overestimated. The opening of the Suez Canal did not reduce passage times at first because ships had to travel through it slowly and stop at night. In fact, it was only from 1888, after improvements were made, that British mails were routinely carried through the canal. Moreover, it is important not to overlook all the other forms of infrastructure associated with industrialised steam mobilities – the coaling stations and later oil refuelling bases – as well as the other, ‘secondary’ mobilities that a reliance on fossil fuel created, such as the bulk coal carriers that were needed to transport coal to these stations. Likewise, the well-known history of the clippers serves as a reminder that pre-industrial technologies remained important at sea, while on land, the period covered by this collection is roughly synonymous with what has also been characterised as the ‘last century of the horse’. Other infrastructural developments were associated with changes in technologies of communication, such as the introduction and expansion of electric telegraph networks. The systems in Britain and India were connected in 1870 and the worldwide system of submarine cables and overland telegraphs was completed in 1902.

Third, new technologies of transport and communication not only facilitated all manner of trans- and extra-imperial mobilities, but also fuelled the production and flow of new imperial information and ideas. Expanding telegraph networks permitted more rapid dispatch of news, making a household name of new embedded war correspondents or ‘specials’, and bringing the empire and its violence to British audiences more readily than ever before. In more mundane terms, the imperial postal system kept families and friends in touch across
the experience of emigration.\textsuperscript{88} Indeed, along with links of trade and investment, and continuing emigration to the Dominions, a system of global communications that transmitted news, opinions, values and ideas contributed to ‘British race sentiment’ or ‘Britannic nationalism’, what has been described as ‘an aggressive sense of cultural superiority as the representatives of a global civilization then at the height of its prestige’.\textsuperscript{89} The articulation of ideas about imperial power sometimes also turned on different ideas about mobility, as exemplified by the competing ‘Bricks and Mortar’ and ‘Blue-Water’ schools of thought that articulated different British ideas about imperial defence.\textsuperscript{90} At the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of ‘sea-power’ found particular articulation by the American naval officer, Alfred Thayer Mahan, while a very different understanding was articulated by the British geographer Halford Mackinder, whose ‘heartland theory’ placed emphasis on the geopolitical implications for naval powers like Britain of the railway systems that were expanding across Europe and Asia.\textsuperscript{91} In the early twentieth century, notions of ‘airpower’ would also find articulation.\textsuperscript{92} The development of an increasingly integrated and global world of science and commerce, knitted together by railway and telegraph networks, also necessitated the introduction of common standards and metrics, such as the adoption of Greenwich Mean Time as the prime meridian in 1884.\textsuperscript{93}

Although the very long nineteenth century that is the focus of Empire and Mobility saw major developments and changes in relation to patterns of migration, the impact of technologies and the shifting significance of ideas – which perhaps constituted a specific constellation of mobility – our individual chapters explore this context in much greater detail.

\textit{Imperial histories of movement and mobility}

Mobility Studies may offer new perspectives to research imperial histories, but there is no doubt that historians of empire – including the British Empire – have examined important themes that warrant further attention by scholars working in mobility studies and mobility history. While this is an inevitable consequence of the different foci of these scholarly communities, we would argue that mobility scholars could very usefully learn from research on the history of empire in order to aid their understanding of a number of issues and to extend the temporal reach of their studies. A key difference between these fields of study is the very different temporal horizons and mobility practices examined by scholars of empire and mobility. First, the majority of research in Mobility Studies focuses on the present or
indeed the future, examining key issues relating to contemporary practices, policies and evolving mobility and transport systems. Those scholars who do study mobility history tend to focus on the past one or two centuries – since the ‘birth’ of the railway, bicycle, motor car and aeroplane – with the much longer history of travel by walking, horse-drawn vehicles, boat and other modes receiving much less attention. A second point, related to this, is that while histories of empire have focused extensively on maritime movements and imperial communication and knowledge networks, there has been a relative neglect of maritime and communications histories and geographies by mobility scholars. The majority of scholarship on mobility is, unquestionably, terrestrial, transport-related and urban in its focus, with maritime mobilities and knowledge networks comprising a very small proportion of studies. Nevertheless, research has emerged over the past few years on mobile media, as well as examining the geographies of seas, ships and other watery mobilities in writings, which explicitly builds upon the more established scholarship in historical geography on maritime networks and mobilities. Maritime mobilities frequently (though not exclusively) take place in extra-territorial spaces which are less tightly regulated and policed than sovereign territorial lands or airspaces, but these spaces serve and have served as key sites for a broad range of technologies of movement by states, military powers and commercial agencies, as well as key sites of globalisation, innovation, political power, war and death throughout recorded history.

The focus of historians of empire upon mobility cultures and economies has exposed the political histories of imperial mobility constellations and holds important lessons for mobility scholars. First, research by historians of empire on the changing histories and geographies of international geopolitical and commercial relations has helped to trace the history of early globalisation, revealing how the (imperial) history of early globalisation is a story of the mobilisation of people, knowledge, capital and goods. This history can hold important lessons for scholars concerned with globalisation today. Second, historians of empire have held a long-standing concern with understanding the role of military (and naval) forces in imperial rule, and despite recent work by mobility scholars that emphasises the need to move beyond civilian mobilities to examine military movements and mobilisations of different kinds, important research remains to be done in this area. Third, research on race and ethnicity is central to work on histories and geographies of empire and imperial mobilities, as well as related work on hybridity, diaspora and Black Atlantic cultures, but it remains a relatively minor (though important) sub-theme within mobilities scholarship. Important
examples include scholarship by Cotten Seiler, Jeremy Packer and Paul Gilroy on African-American automobility cultures in the USA, \(^{98}\) Gordon Pirie on rail travel in apartheid South Africa\(^ {99}\) and Georgine Clarsen on white settler car cultures in colonial Australia,\(^ {100}\) but more work needs to be undertaken to examine the politics of racialised movement and mobilities.\(^ {101}\)

The chapters

The substantive chapters that make up Empire and Mobility range from the Georgian era to the interwar period, and they are organised chronologically. The application and development of military knowledge was vital for the maintenance and expansion of the British Empire across our very long nineteenth century. In Chapter 2, Huw J. Davies examines how military experiences moved between different theatres and conflicts. Focusing on the mid-to-late eighteenth century, he examines the mobilities of officers and their writings, and how military knowledge was shared through one-to-one exchanges and the coalescence of multiple experiences that sometimes occurred during campaigns – what Davies labels ‘personal’ and ‘polysynchronous’ contacts respectively.

Innes M. Keighren focuses on the mobile life of the Scots Caribbean plantation owner, political commentator and travel writer William Macintosh in Chapter 3, highlighting the importance of embodied movements and the circulation of ideas to empire in the late eighteenth century. After outlining Macintosh’s life and work in Grenada in the 1760s and 1770s, Keighren discusses the complex reception of his Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa (1782) amongst political commentators in the 1780s, arguing that the credibility of the text and the authority of Macintosh’s view on the failures of the East India Company were inseparable from his individual mobility and his experiences in both the West Indies and East Indies.

In Chapter 4, Sarah Thomas examines the works of art produced during the first circumnavigation of Australia (1801–3) by British landscape painter William Westall and Austrian botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer. The chapter considers not only the status of the peripatetic artist as eyewitness, but also examines the mobility of visual culture itself. In this way, it explores some of the contradictions between mobility and place for how the art of exploration is understood. Indeed, while Westall’s coastal profiles contributed to the British Admiralty’s cartographic project and Bauer’s sketches assisted in the totalising project of Linnaean classification, their mobilities were at odds with the practicalities of producing works of art and, more significantly,
with the scientific demands made of the voyager-artist: precision and immutability.

In Chapter 5, Justine Atkinson examines the mission movement that developed from the early nineteenth century to serve the spiritual and material needs of British seamen at home and across the world. Focusing on the Pacific and Indian oceans, she reveals shifting and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards merchant sailors, who could be seen as vectors for the spread of British and Christian values, but were also feared for being a disruptive onshore presence in settled and indigenous communities. Overall, the chapter demonstrates how maritime mobilities, which were vital to knitting together networks of trade within and beyond the British Empire, also serve as a lens for understanding the dynamic relations between imperial and native authorities, traders and evangelical organisations.

In the nineteenth century, the explorer emerged as one of the most celebrated figures of the imperial project, travelling to extend the frontiers of European geographical knowledge. However, the place of such mobile agents within the Victorian culture of exploration was not uncontested. In Chapter 6, Natalie Cox introduces the important, but often overlooked, figure of the ‘easychair geographer’. Focusing on William Desborough Cooley, who ‘explored’ by reading, collating and synthesising texts, and his clashes with missionary-explorer David Livingstone, Cox exposes the fabricated dichotomy of mobility and immobility that has often been oversimplified in the history of geography as an active science of empire.

In Chapter 7, Catherine Coleborne examines how transient people who stopped in the wrong place were regulated and subject to coercive power through an examination of the development of New Zealand’s vagrancy laws in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Her argument is that these efforts to regulate mobility were a key part of how colonialism operated in terms of the creation of knowledge, the application of control and the construction of social difference. Moreover, Coleborne explains how New Zealand’s vagrancy laws differed from the British metropolitan model by specifically criminalising vagrant Pakeha/Europeans thought to be consorting with Māori or ‘aboriginal natives’.

In Chapter 8, Nuala C. Johnson examines the mobilities of the amateur botanist and watercolourist Charlotte Wheeler-Cuffe as she travelled around Burma with her husband, the colonial administrator Otway Fortescue Luke Wheeler-Cuffe. The chapter traces Charlotte’s life-path between England, Ireland and Burma, revealing the importance of gender, class and colonial relations to her mobilities. Her life and writings resonate with themes of movement and mobility.
at many levels, from the movements of the couple around Burma and between Europe and Asia, to her movement of plants in the colony and the circulation of her watercolours, letters and various commodities.

In Chapter 9, Martin Mahony describes how the mobilities of meteorologists and meteorological knowledge and the siting of weather stations was vital to the development of imperial air routes and networks in the 1920s and 1930s. Drawing upon the memoirs of Albert Walter, the founding director of the British East African Meteorological Service, Mahony shows how scientific knowledge of the atmosphere and weather systems was positioned as vital to the success of imperial air routes, with Walter undertaking extensive journeys by car, truck and aeroplane in an attempt to identify suitable locations for weather stations.

Liz Millward examines the promises and messy realities of British imperial aviation in the 1920s and 1930s in Chapter 10. After examining the cultures of ‘airmindedness’ advanced by prominent aviators and groups such as the Air League in the inter-war years, she traces the many hindrances which grounded planes in imperial settings, from weather and crashes, to gender expectations in various societies that could limit the freedoms of female aviators.

In a final afterword, Tim Cresswell takes the focus of the collection – the British Empire and mobility in the long nineteenth century – as the launching-off point for considering the mobility practices, forces and relations that underpinned the territorialisation of what is arguably the most powerful ‘imperial’ state in the world today, the United States of America. After opening his Afterword with a relatively recent observation by the former US Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, Cresswell traces the importance of western movements to visions of a new American empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ranging from political essays to the many painterly representations of the westward course of empire by horse, wagon and railroad, especially in the years surrounding the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 – one of the key infrastructural developments that enabled Jules Verne to imagine Phileas Fogg’s triumphant circumnavigation and thus allowed the fictional Englishman to win his bet.

Notes
3 B. Aldiss, ‘Introduction’, in Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, p. xx. Of course, at the time Verne was writing many social commentators remarked upon the


8 Ibid., p. 185.


10 T. Ballantyne and A. Burton [eds], *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009], pp. 3, 5, emphasis in original.


17 ‘Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database’, www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/about, accessed 13 May 2019. Some scholars have suggested that aggregate and especially quantitative approaches to forced migration – particularly the trans-Atlantic slave trade – may serve to reproduce the dehumanising nature of the trade itself. See M. Rediker, ‘Introduction’, in R. Hörmann and G. Mackenthun [eds], *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and its Discourses* [New York: Waxmann, 2010], p. 11. For this reason, much importance has been attached to ‘slave narratives’, such as that attributed to Olaudah Equiano, even though these are rare and their provenance has not been uncontested: O. Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, 2 vols [London, 1789]. For a discussion see V. Carretta,


EMPIRE AND MOBILITY


While framed as a contribution to new forms of global (or ‘glocal’) history writing, Valeska Huber’s study of the Suez Canal is a fine example here. See Huber, Channelling Mobilities.


For a recent review, see D. Armitage, A. Bashford, and S. Sivasundaram (eds), Oceanic Histories [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018].


The three leading mobility journals are Mobilities [launched in 2006], Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies [launched in 2011] and Applied Mobilities [launched in 2016], but the Journal of Transport History and Mobility in History also covers important work in this area. Research networks and organisations focussing on mobility include T2M [The International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility], Cosmobilities [the European network of mobilities
EMPIRE AND MOBILITY


48 P. Merriman and L. Pearce [eds], Mobility and the Humanities [London: Routledge, 2018].


50 See section one of Adey et al. [eds], The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities, pp. 21–102.


52 See Adey, Mobility.


57 Quite a large proportion of these ‘new materialist’ writings on movement, elements and atmospheres have a ‘hard’ or ‘blunt’ philosophical edge to them, which may not be to the taste of all historians. See, for example: J. Bennett, Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things [London: Duke University Press, 2010]; P. Merriman, Mobility, Space and Culture [London: Routledge, 2012]; D. McCormack, Atmospheric Things: On the Allure of Elemental Envelopment [London: Duke University Press, 2018]. See also T. Nail, Being and Motion [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018].

EMPIRE AND MOBILITY: AN INTRODUCTION


69 For responses to the claim that conventional methods and textual sources fail to articulate dynamic and mobile embodied practices and experiences, see: C. J. Griffin and A. B. Evans, ‘On historical geographies of embodied practice and performance’, *Historical Geography*, 36 [2008], 5–16; Merriman, ‘Rethinking mobile methods’.

70 For an exemplary multi- or cross-scalar approach to mobility, see: Cresswell, *On the Move*.


EMPIRE AND MOBILITY


80 Harper, ‘British migration and the peopling of the empire’.


85 Kaukiainen, ‘Shrinking the world’, p. 16.


EMPIRE AND MOBILITY: AN INTRODUCTION

88 L. Ishiguro, Nothing to Write Home About: British Family Correspondence and the Settler-Colonial Everyday in British Columbia (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2019).


94 Interesting mobility histories which examine other ‘alternative’ modes of transport and mobility include: C. McShane and J. Tarr, The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); R. Livesey, Writing the Stage Coach Nation [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016].


EMPIRE AND MOBILITY
