Introduction

Western travel writing and the city in the Muslim world

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How might the city—an entity in constant flux, dynamism, transformation and contingency—be defined, constructed or produced? What are the discursive tools for the spatial construction and social production of the city and how is the city, itself a social product, defined and depicted? What was—and still is—the role of travel in this production? Can the city be produced, defined and depicted by travellers and travel narratives, and how does the spatial and temporal movement and mobility of travellers and their discourses correspond to the mobility of the city itself? By examining these questions, this volume aims to scrutinize the relationship of the traveller—whether soldier, pilgrim, scholar, merchant, artist, diplomat or tourist—to the city, and to reveal the role of travel accounts, both visual and textual, in the social production of the city. 'The city', here, is not a stable entity with a solid form but, on the contrary, a constantly evolving paradigm, an ongoing construction of mobile individuals living, experiencing or visiting the city, which is thus a complex sum of their perceptions, depictions and conceptualizations.

Georg Simmel, defined as the "the first sociologist to reveal explicitly the social significance of spatial contexts for human interaction" by David Frisby,[1] emphasized the social consequences of space as early as 1903. Simmel introduced the term 'sociation', indicating interaction between individuals through social encounters or relationships that are also related to their position in space. According to him, space requires five fundamental qualities to structure common or urban life: exclusivity; boundary; the capacity to fix the contents of social formations; proximity; and, of particular relevance to our discussion here, fluidity, that is, the possibility of moving from place to place, and/or the mobility of urban individuals.[2] Half a century later, French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre introduced and elaborated the theory of social production of space, and his ideas remain at the core of our analysis and understanding of the city. Urban space is not merely a combination of residential units, trade and production facilities, transportation axes and public spaces, but is greater than the sum of these entities: the city is a network of social, economical, political, ecological and intellectual relations. According to Lefebvre, "space is a social product, a complex social construction which affects spatial practices and perceptions".[3] In other words, there is a mutual interaction

between urban space and social production, where norms, values and politics shape, and can be shaped by, the urban space. Although Lefebvre directed his attention specifically at capitalist society, other aspects, such as religion, as a major social norm, may also be considered to play a significant role in this construction. In this volume we hope to shed light on the geographical, cultural and religious aspects of urban space, and to show how the East is perceived by the West; more explicitly, how the city in the Muslim world was depicted, defined and produced by the western traveller.

The role of religion in the formation of urban space has been widely discussed and studied; in particular, the 'Islamic city' and 'Islamic society', positioned as the polar opposites of the modern, capitalist city and society, have been formulated by various scholars. Except to give a brief summary of this academic discourse, we are not concerned here to reformulate these categories, but rather to reveal the role of travel writing in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of this essentialist vocabulary.

The question of the city

Perception of the city and the meaning embedded in it, is defined and structured by the accumulation of collective and personal experiences and memory: it is not only the sum of individual experiences within or of the city, but the agglomeration and interaction of these experiences at different levels, through various mediums and via separate social codes, that produces meaning within the city. Renowned urban historian Spiro Kostof defines this as the "social implications of urban form" and states that architectural and urban meaning is eventually lodged in history and in cultural contexts.[4] Thus, the city is a product of its inhabitants, and the multi-dimensional interaction among those who not only live and experience it, but also shape and define the urban environment while themselves being shaped and defined by it. The city is a dynamic yet visible, perceiveable palimpsest of social, political and economic inputs, and depiction of urban life is a reflection of these inputs through subjective lenses.

Lewis Mumford, the American urban historian and literary critic, suggests that the city as a dynamic entity is under constant transformation, formation and deformation, so that a single definition can never cover all of its manifestations.[5] While it is impracticable to present this never-ending cycle, or to track and document every stage of becoming within the city, it is nevertheless possible to historicize various states of its existence and to present its urban form at a particular time, from a particular perspective. Most of the time, city life is documented unintentionally by those who are experiencing it. Residues of everyday activity—from architectural edifices to movie posters, from bus tickets to local markets—turn into 'documentary fragments' for understanding and depicting urban life.

The life and structure of a city is not only related to architectural edifices—its buildings, monuments, marketplaces, roads and transportation axes—but is also a reflection of social norms and orders, including religion. Rather than

merely the morphology of the urban environment or its physical form, the city is a combination of socio-economic networks and power relations. In Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*,[6] the inhabitants of Ersilia stretch coloured strings from the corners of their houses: the different hues, chosen according to their relationships of blood, trade, authority, or agency, well represent the structure of the city as a web of social networks. When these strings become too many and too complex, the citizens abandon the city, leaving only the strings behind. A traveller coming upon the remains of Ersilia sees only "spider webs of intricate relationships seeking a form". Cities with their webs of relationships leave documentary fragments without a solid form or a fixed definition and it is perhaps in the nature of the traveller to strive hardest to trace and understand them. But it is all too easy, using fragmentary traces to construct an image of an entire city, to fall into biased constructions or misrepresentations, and western travellers, more often than not, tended to produce Eurocentric representations out of the documentary scraps they came across.

The traveller has a unique status, being both eastern and western, insider and outsider, local and stranger. This 'positionality' of travellers, in fact, makes each individual's experience and narrative distinct and the resulting travel accounts offer multiple ways of thinking about the cities described. Such representations, reflecting the traveller's positionality between internal and external, are both ideological and spatial constructions. 'Internal', here, refers to those inhabiting and experiencing the city, engendering their own spaces of socialization and their own networks of interaction within the city, while the 'external' eye observes and represents the social, physical, geographical, economic, anthropological or architectural aspects of the city while keeping a social, cultural and mental distance. Travellers, having a more than merely symbolic relation with the city, live in, experience and represent it, taking part in the creation of urban culture and production of knowledge while maintaining their liminal status between external and internal.

Travellers are not only literally mobile—moving physically from one place to another—but they are also mobile on the epistemological level, shifting among various identities, ideas, positions and positionalities. French cultural theorist Paul Virilio introduced the term 'dromology', the science of speed, and relates mobility with power and possession of the territory. Virilio takes "the image of the 'polis' (city) as a dynamic, vehicular landscape".[7] The mobile individual contributes to knowledge of the city, and travel accounts could be seen as snapshots of urban life, depicting and defining a city in constant flux, with its inhabitants in constant motion. This multiple mobility creates a challenge for contextualizing travel narratives, and how to define, depict and analyze the city, as a constantly changing and evolving phenomenon, is an ongoing discussion. From antiquity, the concept of the city has been studied and elaborated by both western and eastern scholars. Our aim in this volume is neither to challenge nor to confirm these deliberations, but rather to show that the definitions themselves are also mobile and in constant transformation.

Here, it is important to clarify that, even though this volume focuses on the depictions of the western visitors to the Muslim world, the accounts of local travellers are also significant sources for the production of the urban image, contributing to the perception of the city both inside and outside the Islamic world. Roxanne Euben's *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* explores the role of both eastern and western travellers in the production of knowledge. Euben, "instead of only investigating how Western travel writing produces the 'colonized other'," asks how "travel and exploration by Muslims produced and transformed their own sense of self and other, of membership".[8] And, although we have limited ourselves to consideration of accounts by western travellers, local accounts are equally susceptible to the critical perspective outlined here. Conceptualizations of the city by travellers, whether eastern or western, are not uniform; and their definitions of urban space and their categorizations are always open to discussion. One of the most debatable categories is that of 'Islamic city', and one of the goals of this volume is to scrutinize the ways in which travel literature from different periods contributed to the production and reinforcement of such essentialist terminology.

Throughout history, numerous local and regional travellers voyaged throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Some of these journeys, undertaken for religious, intellectual or economic missions, were recorded in literature: the travelogues of such well-known individuals as Nasser Khosrow, Ibn Battuta and Evliya Çelebi were widely used to study and understand socio-economic and cultural formations in the Islamic world. While these regional and local travellers were diverse in terms of origin, accuracy, and chronological and cultural context, most had the advantage of making observations based on first-hand experiences and testimonies. Their familiarity with dominant languages such as Arabic and Persian enabled them to interact with local people and to read and interpret existing literature, legends, inscriptions and local stories. Although these accounts by Muslim or local travellers are generally accepted as being more reliable or objective sources than those of westerners, it is important to underline the fact that they are subjective representations based on previous knowledge and expectations of these terrains. A priority in the study of any travel account, therefore, must be to explore the writer's preconceptions and prejudices, and the extent of their understanding of the society and of the city they describe.

Max Weber's nineteenth-century analysis of the city could be accepted as a turning point in the field. He argued that, to be defined as such, a city should carry the same legal and administrative elements found in those of European, Christian society. Non-European cities, and particularly Islamic ones, lacking a self-governing body with a collective identity, are therefore not cities. In other words, Weber presented the monolithic and undifferentiated Islamic city as the antithesis of the modern, secular and diverse western city. Without autonomous administrative and legal functions, and civic culture, the Islamic 'city' is simply a place for the accumulation of population.[9] Weber contrasts the webs of organic and complex streets and secluded residential units of the

Middle East to the open public spaces and rational networks of the modern European city.

Despite Weber, the idea of the Islamic city continued to be debated in academic literature, particularly in France where scholars played a crucial role in the formation of Islamic urban studies. According to them, religion played a crucial role in the formation of the city, establishing social norms and relations between citizens. The work of the Marcais brothers from the French school of Algiers could be considered as one of the first 'formal' analyses of a city in the Muslim world.[10] Their conception of the Muslim city and Muslim town planning would seem to fit naturally into the fundamental concept of Orientalism. They focused on the Arab cities of the Middle East, defining them as 'non-cities'—in other words, the negation of Western urban order.[11] Another formal and structural model to define the Islamic city is offered by the Austrian historian and Arabist Gustave Grunebaum. In his essay "The Structure of the Muslim Town", Grunebaum suggested that there is a hierarchical relation between religious components and the city.[12] Following this line, the works of Sauvaget, Pauty, Planhol, Roberts and Blake and Lawless analyzed Middle Eastern cities under the title 'Islamic city', attempting to establish a common denominator that characterized their urban form and structure.[13]

By the 1940s, an interest in the actual architectural and urban topography of the Islamic city had arisen. The account of Aleppo (1941) by French historian and orientalist Jean Sauvaget, could be considered as one of the first comprehensive studies of the history of an Islamic city. Ira Lapidus's work on cities in the Mamluk period in Egypt (1960) and André Raymond's study on Cairo (1973) are also important accounts, while Janet Abu-Lughod's volume on Cairo (1971) was accepted as a classic in the field, explaining contemporary Cairo in relation to its urban history.[14] American urban sociologist and world system theorist Abu-Lughod devotes the first chapter of her book to the concept of the Islamic city, arguing that it is the inheritor to the Medieval city, namely the preindustrial city.[15] Despite the increasing number of academic works devoted to Islamic and Middle Eastern cities, none really challenged Weber, continuing to present the Islamic city as the 'other', and emphasizing how they contrast with contemporary European cities.[16]

It was only after the 1980s that scholars seriously began to challenge Weber's arguments. With the rising critique towards Orientalism, multiple perspectives were brought to bear on the Islamic city; both western and Muslim scholars developed counter-arguments to Weber's theory and introduced new models for understanding and analyzing the cities of the Muslim world. A number of Middle-Eastern scholars with a western education, such as Egyptian-French political scientist Anouar Abdel-Malek, Palestinian historian Abdul Latif Tibawi, and Edward Said were among the pioneers criticizing the western perception of Islam which positioned it as Europe's symmetric opposite.[17] Against this hypothetical orientalist construction, the Islamic city was scrutinized and various nuances and significances identified. Geographical, historical and

cultural differences between them challenged the idea of the unchanging, stable, and stereotypical idea of the Islamic city.

In *Orientalism* and in his other writings, Edward Said played a significant role in the development of this discourse. He questioned western perceptions of the East and accused Europe of biased conceptions and representations. According to Said, the Orient is the constructed 'other' of hegemonic Europe. Said's famous critique draws a great deal on travellers' accounts which, he considered, played a significant role in the construction of the idea of the Orient.[18] He suggests that, travelling either from a desire to discover exotic lands, or from scientific curiosity, travellers always depicted the Orient as being inferior to the West.[19] According to Said, the Orient was 'created' by western travellers for imperialist purposes—in other words, it was 'orientalized'. In his seminal study, *Orientalism*, he considered numerous travellers and their accounts from the Hellenistic to the modern era, arguing that they had shaped and reinforced Orientalism's imperialist view of the world. Said is much criticized for his lack of historiographical perspective and for overlooking the transformations that took place both within the eastern and western worlds.[20] He flattens the narratives, including those of travel accounts, produced by the 'West' at different historical periods to reinforce his thesis, whereas the concept of the Islamic city and western perception towards the East has in fact evolved and transformed over time, with notions of the 'Orient', 'East–West', 'Muslim world', and 'Islamic city' having no rigid or fixed definitions.

Albert Hourani was another Christian Arab intellectual with a western education who criticized the European idea of Islam. He was a mid-twentieth-century scholar who worked on the concept of Islamic city and the idea of Islam in the eyes of westerners. Together with Samuel Miklos Stern, he scrutinized the concept of the Islamic city and argued that Islamic civilization was urban. Like Abu-Lughod, Hourani attempted to construct a picture of what a 'typical' Islamic city would look like, defining its four elements as "the citadel, the royal city or quarter, a central urban complex with mosques, religious schools, and central markets, and finally the core residential quarters".[21] Hourani's approach to the Ottoman-Arab city was groundbreaking, as he uses court records (*kadı sicili*) to depict its socio-political fabric.[22] From this perspective he challenged Weber's main argument that the Islamic city ignored the administrative or legal foundations of the city. Following Hourani, court records, cadastral surveys, tax records and archival documents would be included by scholars working on Islamic cities.[23] Hourani also analyzes the relation between Europe, the Orient and Orientalism, arguing that European awareness of the world of Islam increased in early modern times, and that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the nature of their relationship changed, especially with the decline in Ottoman military power. Meanwhile, improvements in navigation and exploration expanded European trade and settlement in other parts of the world. Increasing interaction led to treaties and alliances between Islamic and Christian states. In Hourani's view, the European discovery of Muslim lands increased commercial, political and scholarly interest

towards the Orient. By the sixteenth century, the first systematic study of Islam and teaching of Arabic at the Collège de France had begun. Library collections and chairs in Arabic were created in the UK, often by travellers who had visited the Middle East.[24]

Despite the abundance of works on Orientalism and on the question of the Islamic city, the majority do not touch on urban aspects. Many examine the role of religion (Islam) in shaping the urban space, but few discuss the role of the city and urban space in the formation of urban culture, or how orientalist discourse was influenced by urban forms and elements. Several books on the cities of the Islamic world focus on the urban fabric and social history of a single city, or comparatively analyze several cities. These volumes, rather than questioning the term 'Islamic city', use it as a given, providing a historic, economic or sociological analysis of the urban precinct. Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo, Istanbul, Jerusalem and many other cities of Muslim lands have been studied and analyzed from either an orientalist viewpoint or a critical perspective. Thankfully, recent studies tend to bring a more analytic and comparative perspective to the field, with scholars such as Nezar Al-Sayyad, Nebahat Avcıoğlu, Irene Bierman, Zeynep Çelik, Edhem Eldem, Oleg Grabar, Donald Preziosi, Nasser Rabbat, André Raymond, Peter Sluglett, Paul Starkey and Janet Starkey offering alternative definitions to the orientalist perception of the Islamic city, and focusing on a wider geographical or political area to analyze the cities of the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia or the Ottoman Empire from multiple perspectives.[25]

So, what is the Islamic city, and how can it be defined? Indeed, *should* it be defined? One of our goals in this book is to bring this homogenizing term, one which refers to a wide array of cities from North Africa to Central Asia, into question. We are aware that by using the vocabulary of binary oppositions—East–West, Islamic city–Western city, Muslim world–European world—we are, in a way, reproducing these very categories, but we have taken a conscious decision to use this terminology, while repeatedly bringing it under the spotlight. The chapters which follow aim to scrutinize the term 'Islamic city' and to address how this idea is constructed, while underlining the fact that, like all constructions, the very *idea* of the Islamic city is subject to continuous change and cannot refer to a homogeneous entity. To better present this diachronological approach, we will cover a wide time-frame, from the medieval to the modern era, asking how the concept of the Islamic city has transformed over time. Thus, we do not intend to ask whether or not such categories as 'Islamic' or 'Islamic city' actually exist, but rather to scrutinize how they were, and still are, produced; and to question the role of the western traveller in this production.

In their comparative analysis of Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul, Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters argue that there are many different types of cities, differentiated according to religious, administrative, commercial or civic functions, but they refute the idea of the European, Arab or Islamic city as a fundamental definition.[26] In this volume, we intend to use the Islamic city as a (practical) terminology but to keep our critical distance from its

essentialist connotations, questioning not only the term itself but also the vast geographical area and the cultural landscape it represents. Our approach corresponds to urban historian André Raymond's classic essay, "Islamic city, Arab city", which is critical of the orientalist perception of Muslim lands:

> In this vast, "Muslim" domain we are certainly faced with an urban system whose reality reveals the great weakness of the Orientalist description: its conclusion, explicit or not, of so-called "urban anarchy", is quite obviously devoid of any meaning, since a city, that is to say a geographical concentration of a large population, can only subsist or develop within a system of coherent relations between its society and the space in which it expands.[27]

In recent decades the idea of the Islamic city, its components, architectural and urban topography has been further questioned. Clearly, while the Islamic city is a complex socio-urban model and the critique of this model is beyond our scope here, it is not possible to ignore the conscious construction of this term and its application to a wide geographical territory. Thus the contributors to this book take this terminology as their point of departure in their scrutiny of the ways in which the cities of the Muslim world were depicted and constructed by western travellers, tracking the various meanings attributed to this concept by different voices to understand how this flattening term involves nuances and fractions within its encompassing unity. Travel accounts of the East played a significant role in shaping the western conception of the Orient and the oriental city, and the chapters which follow will contribute to the discourse on the Islamic city by presenting different approaches and voices to show that it is an ongoing construction.

Urban encounters

Travelling, whether conducted for trade, diplomacy, war, pleasure, curiosity or adventure, is one of the most ancient habits of mankind: it is, in fact, an act of transforming the self. Desiring to relay their experience to others and to immortalize their observations, travellers tend to document their memoirs visually or textually—that is to say, to interpret the 'other'.[28] Travel writing is thus an act of knowledge production and the physical, social and psychological mobility of the traveller and his detachment from home, brings a productive discomfort which leads to the construction of the other and rediscovery of the self, as Albert Camus tells us:

> What gives value to travel is fear. It is the fact that, at a certain moment, when we are so far from our own country … we are seized by a vague fear, and an instinctive desire to go back to the protection of old habits. This is the most obvious benefit of travel […] This is why we should not say that we travel for pleasure. There is no pleasure in traveling, and I look upon it more as an occasion for spiritual testing. If we understand by

culture the exercise of our most intimate sense—that of eternity—then we travel for culture. […] Travel, which is like a greater and graver science, brings us back to ourselves.[29]

According to Roxanne Euben, "travel signals both a metaphor for and a practice of journeying, to worlds less familiar, and in terms of which a traveller may well come to understand his or her own self more deeply and fully".[30] But while travelling enables the individual to fully discover and transform the self and the other, the act of travelling has also been transformed. The edited volume *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (1999), by the British art historian and classicist Jas Elsner and Spanish scholar Joan-Pau Rubiés, focuses on its history.[31] The essays include European explorations of the world and "address the theme of travel as an historical, literary and imaginative process". They offer an historical survey of the practice of travelling in western culture, showing its development from Greco-Roman antiquity, through Christian Europe and finally to modern western civilization. This changing perception of travelling becomes a journey towards modernity, from religious to empirical, from lone traveller to tourist. The authors show how, with the rise of modernity and imperialism, subjectivity gives way to the religion of empiricism: scientific observation and the desire for objectivity distanced the superior European gaze from the 'inferior' cultures under observation, thus creating the orientalist discourse.

Eventually, the act of travelling lost both its individual and scientific edge and turned into mere tourism. Geographer and cultural critic Dean MacCannell focuses on the travelling individual and scrutinizes the concept of 'the tourist' from the perspective of social theory. According to MacCannell, the tourist and tourism are products of modernizing Europe: sightseeing is the mass leisure activity of the modern age.[32] The distinction between tourism and travelling lies in the individual's perception of, and relation to, the places visited.[33] The word 'tourist' first appeared as an adjective, and then as a noun in dictionaries of the 1830s. In France, it was at first used to designate the aristocratic British who, from the seventeenth century onwards, took the 'Grand Tour' as the culmination of their education,[34] but the word soon became a generic description for the modern traveller.[35] MacCannell, as well as Elsner and Rubiés, contextualize travelling and travellers but do not necessarily focus on travel literature as a genre. In this volume we will question whether travel writing has transformed historically and present its complexity as a genre.

Architectural and cultural historian Nebahat Avcıoğlu suggests that travel literature is significant for "transporting architecture (both style and function) of one culture to another".[36] Rather than focusing solely on architectural elements, however, a larger urban scale is introduced, analyzing how urban images and/or representations are transferred and transmitted among cultures, through travelling and travellers. In an inspiring work, linguist and cultural theorist Mary Louise Pratt questions the role of travel writing in the production, of 'the rest of the world', and asks how this genre produced Europe's

differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to its other. She addresses colonial discourses, gender issues, and the role of knowledge and science in relation to travel writing.[37] Pratt suggests that "travel writing was systematically involved in meaning-making process". While analysing the 'rhetoric of travel writing' she also addresses its complexity and interactive structure as a genre. Pratt does not focus on the Orient or Muslim world as the subject of European travel writing; according to her, the rest of the world, whether East or West of Europe, was conceived and visualized as 'places of alterity'. In other words, cities or urban space outside Europe are reflections of western bias. There are a number of works questioning the ethnographic and/or anthropological aspects of East–West divergence, but we hope, here, to show that urban space is another medium through which alterity is constructed.

Similar arguments are raised in the introduction of Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst's edited volume *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire*. Questioning the role of travel writing in European imperial tradition, they suggest a link between the idea of empire and the form of travel writing. According to Kuehn and Smethurst, "through the formal conventions of the travel narrative, mobility is spatialised and synchronized, so the travel writer is able to present reality as an orderly representation".[38] The mobility of the western traveller is not a random voyage but an orderly journey where the idea of travel, politics of travel, culture of travel and writing travel all carry representational values. Our own volume will not focus on the imperial idea embedded in travel writing but rather try to unveil the spatial aspects of travel literature: how the space is perceived and depicted and how this perception shapes the space. Urban context is addressed here as a medium to better analyze the role of travel and travel literature in defining and constructing the 'other' of Europe, and the contributors will scrutinize the different tools and methods of this construction.

Questions and approaches

The role of travel accounts, especially those of western travellers, in shaping and defining the cultural identity of the modern world, cannot be denied. This constructed identity was based on a revolutionary shift in knowledge about the geographic and cultural limits of the globe. The discovery and documentation of distant lands was, in fact, the discovery of the 'other'; in defining its opposing 'other', the West actually defined its own identity—that is to say, representation of the 'other' is a continuous construction of the 'self'. As we have already suggested, we do not intend to discuss whether or not these binary oppositions exist, taking instead the position expressed so succinctly by Michel Foucault in 1983:

> My intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity. By this I mean that, for me, it was not a question of analyzing the internal or external criteria that would enable the Greeks and Romans, or anyone else, to

recognize whether a statement or proposition is true or not. At issue for me was rather the attempt to consider truth-telling as a specific activity, or as a role.[39]

This book takes travel writing as an activity of 'truth-telling' and scrutinizes the role of travel accounts in producing knowledge. Since medieval times, the urban, ethnic, cultural, anthropological, natural and geographical fabric of the Muslim territories has been mapped though travel writings, gradually categorizing and defining these diverse lands and cultures under the all-encompassing term 'Islamic city'. The chapters which follow aim to discuss the various tools of urban representation, analyzing and comparing the corre-spondences and discrepancies between them. Such textual, pictorial, geographical and photographic depictions—techniques of representation which could be defined as 'technologies' from a Foucauldian perspective—created a mental image of the Muslim world.[40]

In 1961, the urban historian and philosopher Lewis Mumford stated that "we need a new image of order, which shall include the organic and personal, and eventually embrace all the offices and functions of man. Only if we can project that image shall we be able to find a new form for the city".[41] For Mumford, the search for an image or a form of representing the city is an ongoing quest. Political theorist and historian Timothy Mitchell, however, was critical of this kind of perception of the urban environment and introduced the concept 'the world as exhibition' in his book *Colonising Egypt*.[42] According to the occidentalist, and rather essentialist, arguments of Mitchell, Europeans were only able to grasp the world by visually representing it or by rendering it as if it were an exhibition. He states that the world-as-picture must be "arranged before an audience as an object on display—to be viewed, investigated, and experienced". In the western conception of the world "everything seemed to be set up as though it were the model or the picture of something, arranged before an observing subject into a system of signification, declaring itself to be a mere object, a mere signifier of something further".[43] In other words, tools of representation—whether textual, visual, pictorial, photographical, museal or exhibitionary—are crucial to the western perception of the world in general and, particularly, of the Orient. The following chapters will epitomize how these technologies of signs were utilized to represent different geographies and at different periods.

Attempting to include spatio-temporal variations, we examine travelogues of different periods, suggesting that not only the travel literature itself as a genre, but the actual practice of travelling is also transformed in different epochs. This volume, by including travellers with different motivations for travel at different eras, presents the complexity and diversity of both travelling and travel writing and how it impacts the perception of city, urbanism, urban life, and citizens. This approach aims at better understanding the changing perception of the East in the eye of the West during different eras, from medieval to modern. The aim is not to present how each city was depicted within a certain time-frame, but

rather to present the transformations taking place in the form and format of these depictions. Rather than being bound to a classic understanding of historical periodizations or geographical limitations, the volume follows a chronological order, but also offers a conceptual analysis, clustering articles around selected themes and investigating the cross-section of travel literature within them.

Our analysis of the Muslim world is not bound to a specific geography or a particular Muslim empire. Against the idea of the static and frozen orient, the civilizations in Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Persia, and Mughal India experienced diverse socio-political and cultural developments which were represented by various travellers in various times and places. Hoping to transcend orientalist preconceptions, cities from Eastern Europe to Central Asia, and from North Africa to India are included here. This geographic variety also provides the opportunity for a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences in western perceptions of Islamic cities through the shared vocabulary and common language of travel accounts. It is interesting to observe how cities of distinct cultural, ethnic, political and social backgrounds were defined through similar lenses: we question what iconic representations were utilized and how these formulations were transformed within the changing social, political and economical contexts of both East and West. Bearing in mind that East–West divergence is at its most polarized where religion is concerned, depictions of the Jewish and Christian quarters within the Muslim geographies, and of Islamic cities within Europe, are also included, offering a different perspective on the concept of the Islamic City and its use of design and urban space. Suggesting that alterity is not solely based on religious or social aspects, but it is in fact a cultural and geographical construction, the concept 'Islamicate' fits our analysis.[44]

To sum up, the chapters which follow initiate new comparisons among European and Muslim cities and encourage new cross-cultural discussions on the underlying factors behind their urban design and development. At the heart of our venture lies the search for answers as to how the cities in the Muslim geographies were defined, depicted, produced, and constructed by travellers—how, in other words, the 'western eye' played a role in defining its constructed 'other'. Rather than attaching to physical or religious boundaries, we tend to define the Muslim world as a cultural geography and include cities located in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa in our analysis. This, in turn, leads to further significant questions: what tools and terminology were used for the depiction of the urban fabric? How were these depictions interpreted in both West and East? We include various forms and techniques of visual and textual depiction to demonstrate the role of representation in travel literature. We also aim to historicize the act of travelling and travel writing, questioning how travel literature evolved and transformed from the medieval to the modern era, and how this transformation corresponded with the western perception of the East. In other words, this volume hopes to transcend existing approaches on travel writing and East–West divergence by offering a critical, yet original perspective and by broadening the scope of the discussion.

Structure and scope of this volume

The twelve chapters which follow focus on European and American travellers and their travel accounts from different eras, which describe and depict the cities of the Muslim world. Not only the concept of the city but also its cultural and social context, the diversity of perspectives in depicting cities, and tools and technologies used in representing cities of the Islamic world are elaborated by authors from diverse backgrounds. The chronological order of chapters attempts to display the evolution and questions the idea of the 'Islamic city', while presenting how Orientalism as a discourse contributes to construction, deconstruction and reconstruction in western travel accounts. This temporal outline also presents the complexity and diversity of travel writing and the evolution of both the genre, and also the practice, of travelling. However, we acknowledge that this chronological approach might carry the risk of overshadowing different conceptual frameworks that we hope to raise.

Chapters of this volume explore the concept of city and urbanism and investigate the relation between the mobile individual and the urban space that is being observed. They aim to investigate what constitutes the city and the urban environment, how and why the terms Islamic city or Muslim city were used in travel accounts, and to underline the plurality and complexity of the act of travelling, the traveller, the genre of travel literature, and the nuances and variations behind them. Cities from different periods and different geographies are scrutinized to provide a multi-dimensional analysis of the qualities that distinguish the Islamic city regardless of time and space.

To challenge the homogenizing term 'western', travellers from various parts of Europe are included in the discussion, and their different cultural codes and attitudes towards 'the rest of the world' are reflected. Rather than focusing solely on the perspective of colonial powers such as Britain and France, travellers from different parts of the world—Danish, Italian, Finnish and American—are also included in the discussion, highlighting the fact that the 'West' is not as homogeneous and uniform as often imagined. Different forms of voyages and missions emphasize the complexity and plurality of travelling, broadening the scope of the discussion. Some journeys were for military, scientific or religious missions, while others had commercial, informative or artistic motives, all of which apparently influenced the way travellers experienced, perceived and depicted the city they visited.

The chapter by **Mohammad Gharipour and Manu Sobti** explores the concept of the tent city (*ordu*) and the ideas behind it, juxtaposing accounts written by European travellers who visited the Persianate world between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries with chronicles and history books by local historians. They bring an different dimension to the discussion of the urban environment, both by taking tent cities as a point of departure and by reflecting the medieval perception of travel writing. Against the very idea of urban settlement, the mobility and ephemerality of the tent cities, and their complex

layers of social interactions, spatial elements and physical codes, are discussed here. **Felicity Ratté** considers the narratives of two Italian travellers to Cairo during the fourteenth century and compares them visually and textually. The pen drawings of Niccolò da Poggibonsi, a Franciscan friar, and the textual accounts of the merchant Leonardo di Niccolò Frescobaldi show their visual and aesthetic appreciation for the built environment of Cairo, but also demonstrate European attitudes to the East before the rise of Orientalism. Addressing the theoretical and cultural aspects of travelling and travel writing, Ratté attempts to present the theme of socio-cultural interaction between East and West.

The chapter by **Mehreen Chida-Razvi** touches upon the definition and representation of urban space and questions the 'absence' of Lahore in European travel writing. This relative absence of the 'shared capital', compared to contemporary travel accounts of other capitals such as Delhi and Agra, raises the question of what is considered as urban, and of which structures and spaces of the city were depicted, and why. In contrast, **Stefan Peychev**'s chapter focuses on a particular building type and analyzes its role in the construction of the 'image of the city'. He studies descriptions of Ottoman Sofia and its public baths, produced by western travellers after the sixteenth century. Peychev also makes a comparative analysis between the accounts of local, that is, Ottoman, travellers, and European voyagers. This chapter introduces questions concerning imageability and spatial perception. Even though Sofia is located in Europe and the public baths had existed since Roman times, the city is depicted as an 'oriental' city and positioned as the 'other' of Europe. From this perspective Peychev's work reveals the biased perspective of the western eye towards an imaginary Orient.

Travel and travel writing are cross-cultural practices where the traveller is exposed to new and different cultures, geographies, and epistemologies. As the perceived cultural distance between the visitor and the visited expands, the impact of the encounter intensifies. Original research by **Jørgen Mikkelsen**, from the Danish State Archives, explores Carsten Niebuhr's descriptions of the urban topography, the economic and social conditions of the cities and towns of Arabia, and the cultural encounters between Europeans and Arabs during the second half of the eighteenth century. The author underlines Niebuhr's "scientific, unbiased and rational" perspective and emphasizes his endeavours to look at Europeans through "Arabian glasses". It is important here to underline the fact that scientific and academic research—against its supposedly neutral and objective standpoint—could be used as a tool for establishing western hegemony over the East.[45]

On the other hand, the article by **Renia Paxinou** underlines the obscure borders between East and West, by presenting how a city in Europe can be considered 'Islamic'. Her analysis reflects the ways in which the Greek city of Jannina, then part of the Ottoman Empire, was represented in traveller accounts either textually or pictorially, or as an interrelation between the two. Taking into account the emergence of Balkan nationalism and the liquidity

resulting from the redefinition of the international political landscape, this chapter examines the motives and purposes of such a narrative activity between 1788–1822.

While Mikklesen covers the whole Arab Peninsula and Paxinou focuses on a single city, **Nilay Özlü** follows the changing perception and representation of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, defined as a city-within-the-city. Her approach is based on Deleuze and Guattari's statement that the nomadic individual does not change in the course of travelling, but instead transforms the space itself, or the meaning of that space. She addresses not only the mobility of the individual within space, but also the versatility of meaning with respect to space-time. Özlü maps the transformation of the Topkapı Palace during the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, from a secluded and mysterious seat of the Ottoman Empire to a tourist spectacle, depending on multiple accounts from numerous European and American travellers. **Valérie Géonet**'s careful examination of European travel accounts on Palestine, in Muslim, Jewish and Christian settlements, epitomizes the stereotypical orientalist perspective of European travellers. Géonet indicates the chronological evolution of this discourse and presents the robust relationship between the orientalist discourse and the perception of urban space: the travellers' vision of urban space is a major inspiration in constructing the imaginary other, especially during the nineteenth century.

Urban environments were depicted using various visual and textual methods and techniques that evolved over time. From fourteenth-century pen drawings and nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings to twentieth-century photography, some chapters in this volume highlight how visual tools, used for depicting the urban landscape, transformed, and also indicate how this technological and aesthetic transformation influenced our understanding of these historic cities. For instance, **Marie-Sophie Lundström**'s chapter focuses solely on the visual representation of the urban context, offering a multi-layered analysis of two Finnish artists and their Tunisian paintings. Lundström not only scrutinizes Hugo Backmansson's cityscapes from the summer of 1898 but also, through a careful analysis of his artwork, reconstructs his itinerary. Most importantly, she considers Orientalist painting, suggesting that Backmansson's pictures are late modifications of this genre, as can be seen in his desire to depict typical orientalist milieus and people while, at the same time, omitting several of the characteristics of traditional Orientalism. She discusses the concept of the 'exotic' within the context of European tourism and its connection to the fear of modernity.

East-West divergence and interaction are also analyzed by **Mohammad R. Shirazi**, who focuses on Naserid Tehran and investigates the urban life and morphology of the city through the eyes of European travellers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Shirazi addresses the way westernization affected urban structure in Tehran, creating a bipolar city in which the binaries of Old and New, East and West, and Orient and Occident subsisted alongside one another in continuous challenge and conflict. Rather than questioning the relevance and validity of the binary Occident and Orient,

Shirazi considers how this terminology has been employed, reproduced and reflected in the way the city was perceived by western travellers.

The next chapter by **Michelle Craig** is devoted to photography, a major source for the construction and critique of orientalist discourse. Craig explores an American photographer's fascination and interactions with Fez during the early twentieth century: Elias Burton Holmes used the visibility and legibility of Fez to imagine the capital as an object for consumption in his own country. Disproving the idea that photography is an objective and unbiased medium for representation, the pictures taken by Holmes reflected the distinctly American vision of Fez without stretching the borders of this touristic narrative.

The concluding chapter brings the discussion up to the mid-twentieth century and discusses the 'post-Islamic city' which marks an end to the Orientalist understanding of the city in a modernizing and globalizing world. **Davide Deriu** takes twentieth-century Ankara, the emerging capital of modern Turkey, as his research topic, offering a comparative analysis of the accounts of four British travellers who visited Ankara in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Notably, this chapter addresses the contrasting perspectives of two female travellers to the developing capital, and also examines reports on Ankara published in *The Times* as a new genre of travel writing. The idea of the 'post-Islamic city' is introduced and elaborated here, in support of the idea that these descriptions of Ankara refer more to its architecture and urban space than to the idea of the Islamic city, and challenge the western perspective on the Orient.

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The initial idea behind this volume was to discuss and analyze the impact of European travel writing on the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the 'other'. Within this broad discourse, there exists an infinite number of 'others', and our intention is to bring the 'cities of the Muslim world' into the discussion. With the aim of scrutinizing the topic from various dimensions, we have tried to achieve spatio-temporal variety by including travel accounts from a large time-frame on a broad geography. An edited volume cannot offer a comprehensive study in terms of geographical and chronological coverage, since both theoretical and practical limitations mean that some Muslim geographies and many significant cities must be left out. The diverse backgrounds of the authors, however, have made it possible to bring a multi-disciplinary vision to the discussion. On the other hand, the approaches of this interdisciplinary portfolio of authors vary, and sometimes bring conflicting ideas to the table: each chapter takes a specific travel account depicting a different part of the Muslim world at a particular time-frame as its topic of study, making a comparative analysis harder to pursue. Nevertheless, this two-fold approach brings the whole picture into scrutiny while creating a platform for critically analyzing the act of travelling, the traveller, and travel accounts

individually; we believe that such an stratagem will remind the reader that perception and representation are historically constructed and bring him/her a more comprehensive perspective, one which presents the ways in which each individual traveller takes part in the construction of the regime of knowledge while simultaneously being a product of this episteme. Overall, we hope that this volume will raise as many questions as it offers answers, and that it will contribute to a critical understanding of the concept of the Islamic city, rejecting its monolithic and hegemonic definitions while underlining the diversity, plurality and mobility of both the cityscape and the individuals who experience, depict and produce the city.

Acknowledgement

Notes

 1 David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 71.
 2 Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Space", and "The Metropolis and Mental Life", in Georg Simmel, David Frisby and M. Featherstone, *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (London: Sage Publications, 1997).
 3 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1991), 26.
 4 Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1992); Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meaning throughout History* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1991).
 5 Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 3.
 6 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).
 7 Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology* (New York: Columbia University, 1986).
 8 Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2.
 9 Max Weber, *The City* (New York: Free Press, 1966).
10 William Marçais, *L'islamisme et la vie urbaine*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Année - Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 72 :1 (1928) 86–100.
11 André Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21:1 (1994): 3–18.
12 Gustave von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Muslim Town", in *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London, 1961), 141–58.
13 Neşe Karaçay Sinemillioğlu, *İslam Kenti Sorunsalı. Eleştirel Bir Okuma*, unpublished MA thesis, İstanbul: YTÜ Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı, 2006.
14 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).
15 Ibid., 54–80.

16 Jean Sauvaget, *Alep, Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origines au milieu du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1941); Jean Sauvaget, *Mémorial Jean Sauvaget* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1954); Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Ira Lapidus, ed., *Middle Eastern Cities: A Symposium on Ancient, Islamic, and Contemporary Middle Eastern Urbanism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1969); André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle* (Damas: Institut français de Damas, 1973).

17 Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis", *Diogenes* 44 (Winter 1963): 104–12; Abdul Latif Tibawi, *English-Speaking Orientalists: A Critique of Their Approach to Islam and Arab Nationalism* (Geneva: Islamic Centre, 1965).

18 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

19 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

20 Edward Said and his works are widely discussed and criticized. See A.L. Macfie, *Orientalism: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Aijaz Ahmad, "Between Orientalism and Historicism", *Studies in History* 7:1 (1991); Michael Richardson, "Enough Said", *Antropology Today*, 6:4 (August 1990): 16–19; Sadik Jalal al-Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse", *Khamsin* 8 (1981): 5–26; Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

21 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

22 Albert Hourani and S.M. Stern, eds, *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

23 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

24 Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*.

25 Irene Bierman, Abou-El-Haj and Donald Preziosi, *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order* (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1991); Peter Sluglett, *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750–1950* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and André Raymond, *The City in the Islamic World* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008); Zeynep Çelik, Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, Frances Terpak and Getty Research Institute, *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2009); Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); Paul Starkey and Janet Starkey, *Unfolding the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East* (Reading, UK: Ithaca, 2001); Paul Starkey and Janet Starkey, *Interpreting the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2001).

26 Edhem Eldem et al., *The Ottoman City Between East and West*, 15.

27 Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City", 17.

28 Nebahat Avcıoğlu, "David Urquhart and the Role of Travel Literature in the Introduction of Turkish Baths to Victorian England", in Starkey and Starkey, *Interpreting the Orient*, 69–80.

29 Albert Camus, *Notebooks, 1935–1942* (New York: Knopf, 1963).

30 Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*, 10.

31 Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999).

32 Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

33 Paul Bowles portrays the distinction between traveller and tourist in the dialogue between Tunner, Kit Moresby, and Port Moresby in his renowned novel *The Sheltering Sky*, where he also states that "another important difference between tourist and

traveller is that the former accepts his own civilization without question; not so the traveller, who compares it with the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking". Paul Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* (New York: New Directions, 1949): 2–3.

PORT MORESBY: Well, terra firma.

TUNNER: We're probably the first tourists they've had since the war.

KIT MORESBY: Tunner, we're not tourists. We're travelers.

TUNNER: Oh. What's the difference?

PORT MORESBY: A tourist is someone who thinks about going home the moment they arrive, Tunner.

KIT MORESBY: Whereas a traveler might not come back at all.

TUNNER: You mean *I'm* a tourist.

KIT MORESBY: Yes, Tunner. And I'm half and half.

34 Roger Hudson, *The Grand Tour, 1592–1796* (London: Folio Society, 1993).

35 Marc Boyer, *Histoire générale du tourisme du XVIe au XXIe siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

36 Avcıoğlu, "David Urquhart and the Role of Travel Literature".

37 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

38 Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst, *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

39 Michel Foucault, *Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhēsia*, six lectures given by Michel Foucault at the University of California at Berkeley, 1983. Available online at www.cscd.osaka-u.ac.jp/user/rosaldo/On_Parrehesia_by_Foucault_1983.pdf (accessed 24 November 2014).

40 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1992).

41 Mumford, *The City in History*, 42.

42 Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988).

43 Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition", *Comparative Studies in Society and History: An International Quarterly* 31 (January 1989): 217–36; Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order", in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 289–317.

44 Criticizing the Euro-American point of view in *The Venture of Islam*, Marshall Hodgson reimagined the terminology dominant in the study of Islamic history and religion. He drew a distinction between the terms 'Islamic', denoting the religion, and 'Islamicate', which refers to the products of regions in which Muslims were culturally dominant, but were not, necessarily, properly religious. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: The expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 293–94.

45 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

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