

*Viaggiatori*



## Fabio D'Angelo

*The scientific dialogue linking America, Asia  
and Europe between the 12th and the  
20th Century.*

*Theories and techniques travelling in space  
and time*

Associazione culturale *Viaggiatori*

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## ***Introduction***

Fabio D'ANGELO  
Scuola Superiore di Studi Storici  
Università della Repubblica di San Marino

[fabiodangelo2003@gmail.com](mailto:fabiodangelo2003@gmail.com)

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Scientific knowledge has been established and developed at various times and places throughout history. The history of science, while investigating and identifying the theoretical and technical processes of sciences in their making, also deals with humankind, places and the timing of science.

From the very beginning, the widespread tendency to foster the dissemination of theoretical and practical knowledge has been so significant that, in certain cases, very little is known about the place in which a given theory or experiment was formulated for the first time.

More specifically, from the Modern Times, a growing awareness has gradually led to the assumption that the economic and scientific development of society, in general, could not exclusively rely on the availability of raw materials and the use of machinery, but it also needed to focus on the exchange of experiences, outcomes and dissemination of knowledge. During this time, both modernisation and economic development were indeed fostering transnational sharing of intellectual and scientific experiences<sup>1</sup>.

In this respect, the first monographic volume of the journal *Viaggiatori* seeks to retrace some 'scientific dialogues', such as encounters, exchanges and pursuit of technical and theoretical knowledge across a geographical area, that would give a foretaste of the historical and cultural contexts in America, Asia, Europe and the Mediterranean, from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Notably, special focus has been placed on the role of the so-called *passeurs*, namely travellers that would act as true "intermediaries" for the acquisition and dissemination of both theoretical and practical knowledge, from one continent to another<sup>2</sup>.

The gradual flourishing of modern science has had a significant impact on the actual planning of a journey, and especially on how it could be shared through diaries and the press. In fact, the reviews, which at first were filled with personal reflections, were progressively coupled with accounts that would rather describe the techno-scientific aspects of the mission. In modern times, and unlike the previous eras, scientific travels started intensifying on the wave of an undiminished enthusiasm for geography and the great expeditions, which urged travellers to go way beyond continental borders. America and the Far East, until then considered *terrae incognite*, were not the only continents in the world that sparked the interest of western people. For example, the 16<sup>th</sup> century is the period in which Europe ceases discovering its own territories and starts embracing its exploratory missions beyond the eastern borders, towards the Americas and the East<sup>3</sup>.

Not only was travelling intensifying, but the journey itself provided practical rules of conduct and concrete feedback that would help travellers build on those itinerant experiences and make best use of

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<sup>1</sup>The theme of travel during modern times, please refer to G. BERTRAND (ed.), *La culture du voyage. Pratiques et discours de la Renaissance à l'aube du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004; S. VENAYRE, *Panorama du voyage (1780–1920)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2012; G. BERTRAND, *La place du voyage dans les sociétés européennes (XVI<sup>ème</sup> – XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle): une vue d'ensemble*, in D. BOISSON (ed.), *Heurs et malheurs des voyages (XVI<sup>e</sup> – XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, numéro spécial des «Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest», 121, n. 3, 2014, p. 7–26

<sup>2</sup> On the concept of *passeurs* please refer to G. BERTRAND, A. GUYOT (eds.), *Des "passeurs" entre science, histoire et littérature. Contribution à l'étude de la construction des savoirs (1750–1840)*, Grenoble, ELLUG, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> R. MAZZEI, *Per terra e per acqua. Viaggi e viaggiatori nell'Europa moderna*, Roma, Carocci, 2013.

their findings once back home. Furthermore, through various forms of writing including travel diaries, journals and tips for travellers, it was possible to provide the reader with useful tools that would facilitate the transfer of knowledge and culture from one country to another. It is precisely thanks to the examination of these different forms of communication, covered in the first part of this volume, *the scientific travel writings*, that the handwritten or printed instructions, submitted to the scientists at the time of departure, acquired great significance. This long series of instructions is undoubtedly an inestimable source of information and an effective means of understanding the evolution and transformation of the communities in which travellers decided to settle. Produced by every single scientist and institution over time, they indeed became the key to interpreting not only the technical aspects of a specific expedition, but also other aspects, including society and its relationship networks. Its comprehensive structure is, in fact, a literary genre in its own right, subject to unique rules and guidelines, which would adapt and change each time, according to the travellers' objectives and cultural background, and therefore be crucial to the success of their missions<sup>4</sup>.

In this respect, travel instructions and the diaries would mainly focus on the systematic collection of data and the observation of nature and its phenomena, which were indeed the primary objects of scientific mobility. This approach can be easily verified through the change of style in scientists' narrative works, which would gradually turn into veritable travel chronicles and thereby provide a more accurate description of their surrounding world, its places and cultures. Suffice to think of Louis Antoine de Bougainville's work, *Voyage autour du monde* and his accounts on Tahiti (1771), which almost certifies the official birth of modern anthropology with its idealised 'noble savage' concept, later glorified in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Furthermore, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the popular naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi from Bologna had also already emphasised, in his quote, the importance of travel as a cognitive scientific tool: "*Et io ancora sono stato quasi per tutta l'Italia et sue isole, et in Francia et in Spagna dimodoché posso dare notizia di molte piante, che da altri non siano state descritte, non ritrovandosi cosa, che apporti più utilità, che il fare viaggi in diversi tempi, conservando, et descrivendo l'istoria di ciascuna cosa, che si ritrova. Et se il leggere dà tanta utilità a i studiosi, dieci volte più ne dà la peregrinatione*". (*And I have been travelling all over Italy and its islands, and in France and Spain, so I can relate of many plants that others have not yet described, as nothing can be more serviceable than making several trips at separate times while preserving and describing the history of each thing that is found. And if reading is so useful to scholars, then wandering is ten times more*).

However, other written forms of scientific communication for the dissemination of knowledge began to gain significant ground, especially between the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the success of scientific texts for travellers, along with diaries and chronicles, were paving the way for the launch of various publishing initiatives and magazines that would move away from the standardised academic environment to meet the favour of a wider audience, while fostering the development of new scientific disciplines and the dissemination of knowledge. The analysis of the numerous historical sources shows however, the key role played by scientific travels in the transfer of knowledge in terms of «its utilitarian dimension along with its ethical and pedagogical value»<sup>5</sup>.

In the section *The Travel to America*, the essays cover the same geographical areas including Latin America, the US and Europe, and focus on the role of travelling scientists in the dissemination of scientific practices between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Those explorers, while moving from the New World to the Old World, or indeed within the same continent, would examine the potential of geographical, social and political areas and compare the different models with the aim of creating a new one. However, considering the different political backgrounds, especially after the Restoration period, this new model would share dissimilar connotations, both in form and content, in the face of the emerging constitutionalising projects seeking to redefine, or re-establish the same American and European political systems<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> M. BOSSI, C. GREPPI (eds.), *Viaggi e scienza: le istruzioni scientifiche per i viaggiatori nei secoli XVII-XIX*, Firenze, L. Olschki, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> A. CANDELA, *Alle origini della Terra. I vulcani, le Alpi e la storia della natura nell'età del viaggio scientifico*, Varese, Insubria University Press, 2009, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> M. BELISSA, B. COTTRET (eds.), *Cosmopolitismes, patriotismes. Europe et Ameriques 1773-1802*, Rennes, Les Perséides, 2005.

Special emphasis has been placed on – *The scientific practices and methods of travel* – and more precisely on how people used to travel, including their choices of destinations, itineraries and their evolution over time, as well as on the practice of acquiring valuable findings – antiques, artefacts, works of art – that would not only contribute to the conservation of their local institutions, but also foster the transfer of culture from one country to another.

The closing section of the volume – *Mediators, scientists, informants*– seeks to examine the accumulation of knowledge and its transformation, along with its dissemination, especially through the work of those travelling scientists viewed as *passeurs* or intermediaries<sup>7</sup>. In the transition between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the essays herein contain focus on the idea that the sharing of knowledge, while enabling scientists to become a viable means for its scientific development and dissemination, has constantly promoted intercultural dialogue between different disciplines and fields of knowledge. In this respect, it is worth investigating the work of those scholars to understand the impact of their contribution to the unravelling of the complex network of relations and synergies within the different fields of science, and also their interaction with the written texts produced by the travelling scientists.

Travelling entails the actual detachment from the place of origin towards the discovery of unknown destinations. This implies that those who travel necessarily need to move beyond their consolidated certainties and experience each time an inevitable sense of instability and uncertainty. Thus, territorial mobility allows for a significant social transformation of the individual, who will comply and embrace, relentlessly, with a new identity. Compared to the cultural and social habits in the home environment, and despite a basic ambiguity, scientific mobility generally enjoys a broader margin of freedom while acquiring local knowledge in a specific destination. Ultimately, travel appears to be a particularly complex issue. No matter how and where, either in Europe, overseas or in the Far-East, it will always present unique challenges, and it is these challenges the author is seeking to explore and examine.

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<sup>7</sup> On this notion shall you consult G. BERTRAND, A. GUYOT (eds.), *Des « passeurs » entre science, histoire et littérature. Contribution à l'étude de la construction des savoirs (1750-1840)*, Grenoble, Ellug, 2011.



## ***History and Heritage: the portrayal of landscape of the South of Portugal in travel accounts in modern period***

Antónia Fialho CONDE  
Universidade de Évora – CIDEHUS

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**Riassunto:** Negli ultimi decenni l'uso di resoconti e guide di viaggio come fonti storiche ha aperto nuove piste di ricerca. L'analisi di queste fonti consente di studiare diversi argomenti: la storia dell'arte, definendo il concetto di patrimonio; la storia economica, attraverso la loro interrelazione con i diversi mezzi di trasporto o le nuove industrie che lo sviluppo tecnico e industriale ha fornito ai viaggiatori; la storia sociale e culturale, attraverso la loro interrelazione con lo sviluppo del tempo libero e del viaggio come mezzo di piacere e educazione. Questo testo si baserà sui racconti dei viaggi nel Portogallo meridionale tra il XVII e il XVIII secolo, sottolineando le descrizioni del paesaggio e del paesaggio culturale.

**Abstract:** In the last decades the use of travel accounts and travel guidebooks as historical sources has opened new lines of investigation. The analysis of this sources allows one to study different topics: the history of art and define the concept of heritage at each point in time; the economic history, through their interrelationship with the different means of transport or new industries, which technological and industrial development provided for the travellers/tourists; the social and cultural history, through their interrelationship with the development of leisure, free times and voyage as a mean of pleasure and education. This text will be based on the accounts of journeys in southern Portugal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emphasizing the descriptions of landscape and cultural landscape.

**Keywords:** History; Heritage, Cultural Landscape, Travel accounts, South of Portugal, modern period.

### **Introduction**

Travel accounts are an important source of information also for the study of the landscape and landscape features as they contain descriptive elements of a range of types (economic, historical and also geographical) of the places visited by travellers.

These accounts record the experiences and personal views of travellers in a range of written forms, mainly diaries describing journeys and personal experiences, in contrast with the romanticised and fictional material contained in literary works.

The analysis of such travel accounts normally focuses on the historiographical perspective as they are regarded as sources supporting the historical discourse, above all related to archaeology, art history, architecture and the historical and cultural heritage. In fact, travellers' taste for all things ancient and historic ruins, especially classical remains, which through travel was satisfied on the Grand Tour, provided elements which structured these areas by identifying, describing and representing monuments. The descriptions produced by travellers (very often individuals) with a view to later publication in travel accounts, which often contained historical references to sites and pictorial representations of monuments and landscapes, led to the creation of increasingly demanding publics and potential travellers; this trend is visible from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. A main aim of travel, especially from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was natural research, particularly in the field of botany. The phenomenon of the *Grand Tour* as an integral part of the education of members of European elites coincided with the invention of the landscape, which represented the emergence of a new aesthetic sensibility; only in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was nature truly admired for its beauty and mountains, for example, were now seen as attractive features.

In the field of the pictorial representation of the landscape most common subjects are the panoramic view, features regarded as being of interest (for example, volcanoes and bays), and cities considered to be of historical interest (*vedute*); also represented were images with epigraphic transcriptions, ancient monuments and architectural details considered to be of interest by the individual traveller.

One should not forget the contribution of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century travellers with artistic leanings who observed the landscape in the light of their aesthetic tendencies and described features considered to be of interest for readers of travel accounts. These were specialised accounts produced in accordance with

the desire of the readership to be educated; including representations of ancient and ruined remains, they created also new dynamics (on aesthetic and in vocabulary). They contributed towards a “construction” of images about cities or the countryside, also as to understanding the evolution and modification of landscapes.

### Characterisation of the Alentejo region

The Alentejo, a region of Portugal situated south of the River Tagus, accounting for approximately a third of the total surface area of the country, is bounded to the north by the River Tagus, to the east by the Guadiana and to the south by the Algarve hills, while in the west it faces the Atlantic Ocean; the Sado and Tagus river basins are located in the west of the region. The characteristic vegetation type is known as *montado* (cork-oak and holm-oak groves), and there are also olive trees, stone pines and maritime pines, and eucalyptus plantations now cover large areas; other typical vegetation types are juniper, furze and the rock-rose. There is a singular range of species of fauna which inhabits an increasingly restricted area: rabbits, hares, partridges, wood-pigeons, doves, foxes and wild cats. In terms of land use the region is characterised by prevalence of large estates on which mainly cereals and vineyards are grown.

### The Alentejo landscape and 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century travellers

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, we have to the south of Portugal one of the best representations of landscapes by Pier Maria Baldi, where we find places named *vendas*, not only rural ones but also in the cities or the places, that served to change horses, eat and sleep. The work of Baldi, accompanying the travel that Cosme de Médicis made in Portugal in 1668-69, it's essential in the History of landscape.

In the same century, we have the account of João Baptista Lavanha, accompanied Philip I of Portugal on his visit to the country in 1619<sup>1</sup>, as official chronicler of the dual monarchy. In a discourse abounding with descriptions of receptions and royal entries into cities, there is an attempt to build up a picture of some of these cities, like Elvas, described as a rich, noble city « inhabited by many nobles and wealthy citizens, producing cereal, cattle and olive oil». As regards Évora, he praised the « beauty of its buildings, and the abundance and fertility of the surrounding countryside».

Father François de Tours, a Franciscan friar, journeyed across Portugal to Lisbon by way of Moura, Vidigueira, Alvito and Torrão in May 1699. He spent the night in Moura, and travelled on to the capital, passing through Vidigueira, Alvito, Torrão, Porto Del-Rei, Alcácer and Setúbal. On the way he gave an account of the landscape, praising its great beauty and portraying it as being abundantly planted with vineyards and cereals. On his return journey, Tours followed a different route, from Aldeia Galega to Montemor, Évora, Évoramonte, Estremoz and Elvas, but did not go into any great detail on the landscape.

In the eighteenth century the number of travelers increased greatly, as well as its socio-economic profile, their training and the objectives of travel and accommodation:

#### Alentejo travellers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

Decades	Travellers per decade	Travellers journeying for more than a year	Predominant country of origin
1770-1709	12	2	France
1710-1719	11	4	Various
1720-1729	11	3	France and England
1730-1739	6	4	Italy
1740-1749	10	2	Various

<sup>1</sup> J. B. LAVANHA, *Viagem da Cathólica Real Magestade del Rey D. Filipe II N.S. Ao Reino de Portugal e Rellação do Solene Recebimento que Nelle se Lhe Fez*, Madrid, Thomas Iunti, 1622.

1750-1759	18	2	Various; many Spaniards
1760-1769	21	-	Various
1770-1779	35	-	Various; many Spaniards
1780-1789	32	4	
1790-1799	34	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>		

Between them, Charles Frédéric de Mervilleux<sup>2</sup>, that made a journey through the south of Portugal in 1726 on his fourth visit to Portugal, crossing the Spanish border near Elvas, accompanied by a painter, a disciple of Watteau, a common custom in Europe at that time. The landscape of the Elvas region is described as being fertile with vineyards and olive groves, while on the route from Estremoz to Montijo was the sandy soils and short brush cover were noted, as well as an abundance of game.

Don Juan Alvarez de Colmenar<sup>3</sup> wrote an account of his travels about fifteen years later, while he also provided some information about the landscape. Describing Serpa, he says that « the sun smiles on this place», enabling it to produce excellent fruit such as lemons and oranges. The countryside is very attractive, planted with fig and olive groves. As for Beja, he states that it is located on a very fine plane which is extremely fertile, producing mainly wine. It contains descriptions mainly of cities from a markedly military perspective. This is evident in the engravings which accompany the text, mainly depicting cities and city walls, while there is little variation in terms of the landscapes presented; in fact, in some cases it is only a few scattered trees can be seen, as the cases of Estremoz (Figure 1) and Vila Viçosa (Figure 2):

Figure 1



Estremoz (Portugal), Juan Alvarez de Colmenar, *Annales d'Espagne et de Portugal*

<sup>2</sup> C. F. de MERVILLEUX, *Memórias instrutivas sobre Portugal: 1723 – 1726*, In C. B. CHAVES, *O Portugal de D. João V visto por três forasteiros*, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. de COLMENAR, *Annales d'Espagne et de Portugal*, Amesterdão, François L'Honore & Fils, 1741, Tomo III, p.286.

Figure 2



Vila Viçosa (Portugal), Juan Alvarez de Colmenar, *Annales d'Espagne et de Portugal*

Giuseppe Gorani<sup>4</sup>, in the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, describes a fertile region of which vineyards, olive groves and cultivated fields are the main feature, and there are orchards too; the region produces wheat, melons, fine wines, and olives, which are used to make high-quality olive oil, citrons, oranges and figs, and he also mentions the marble quarries and mining resources.

Giuseppe Baretti<sup>5</sup>, an Italian traveller, wrote a description of a journey through Portugal which consisted of a travel diary in the form of imaginary letters written to his brothers. The complete collection was published in London in 1770, and not until 1830-31 in Italy in its entirety; a critical edition was published in 1941. Here are some of his impressions of the countryside:

(...) from Aldeia Gallega to Vendas Novas, all I saw was bushes with the occasional pine tree, except for the vineyards ... the soils along the way were quite sandy, and it is all very tiresome (...)” and the three leagues from Pegões to Vendas Novas seems to him like “(...) a sandy desert (...) there are no houses to be seen in such a vast expanse of territory (...).

After Vendas Novas, on the way to Montemor, the landscape changes, becoming more undulating, with low hills covered with a few trees, mainly olive-trees. From Arraiolos to Venda do Duque there is a radical change in the landscape, with olive-trees and holm-oaks a constant feature. Baretti walks part of the way from Venda do Duque to Estremoz, noting some of the plants along the way which he has never seen before (for example, heather and rock-rose), revealing a poor knowledge of botany.

This description is much the same as that of Costigan<sup>6</sup>, writing in the late 1770s. He describes the city of Évora as being surrounded by orchards producing a variety of types of fruit, as well as wheat fields, giving the idea of an intense pattern of land use and fertile soils. The author is less inspired by the Beja area, which he thinks is much less fertile, portraying it as little more than a barren desert, and he states that the few inhabitants of the region are poorly educated and are unable to provide much information about the land they cultivate.

William Beckford travelled in Portugal during the same period. On his journeys in the south of the country, travelling east, he reached Aldeia Galega on 28<sup>th</sup> Novembro 1787, and on the following day he

<sup>4</sup> G. GORANI, *A Corte e o País nos anos de 1765 a 1767*, Lisboa, Lisóptica Lda., 1989

<sup>5</sup> G. BARETTI, *Journey from London to Genoa through England, Portugal, Spain and France*, London, T. Davis, 1770.

<sup>6</sup> A. W. COSTIGAN, *Cartas sobre a sociedade e os costumes de Portugal, 1778-1779*, Lisboa, Lisóptica Lda., 2 Vols.

made his way to Pegões. He describes the route<sup>7</sup> as passing through a barren region, with some olive and holm-oak groves. Breaking his journey at Pegões at an inn, he travelled on to Vendas Novas, to the palace built by King John V in 1729, and describes the route through arid countryside:

(...) As I stood on the palace terrace the horizon sparkled with a thousand colours, and the pink-green plains stretched out into the distance. I took a deep breath of fresh morning air, heavy with the scent of the aromatic herbs and flowers, whose petals were half open. I could not believe this was the last day of November, for it seemed I had slept all through the winter and had just awoken in the month of May. (...)

The landscape on the way to Montemor-o-Novo he finds monotonous, the route lined with olive groves. After Arraiolos and Estremoz, near Elvas, the landscape changes and there is a vast area of olive-trees, with springs by the roadside:

(...) I crossed interminable wooded plains, whose shady green foliage endowed the region with a melancholic tone. One or two miles from Elvas, the appearance of the countryside changes, and there is a vast forest of olive-trees, with springs lining the road, and avenues of poplars which have not yet shed all their leaves [in December]. Dominating the city, the arches of an aqueduct, from some points, offer the perspective of a ruined gothic cathedral. The city walls are arranged in the manner of English gardens, providing very pleasant walks. (...).

James Murphy<sup>8</sup>, the English intellectual who travelled in Portugal in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, had a background and special interest in the fields of archaeology and architecture. In his descriptions there are a few details of interesting historical features of the landscape of the south of the country.

Travelling south-east from Aldeia Galega to Beja, Murphy noted great differences between the coastal region and the interior of the south of Portugal in terms of landscape, demography and development. In the coastal region, he thought the landscape was worthy of portrayal by a great painter. He finds fascinating scenes, of which the local inhabitants are oblivious, featuring hills, deep valleys, rivers and creeks, with beautiful pines and oaks, farms and religious houses, groups of farm workers and animals, and also many ruins which exist as a testimony to the ancient roots of the local people.

On his journey south from Alcácer do Sal, whose history he praised, following the route to Beja, Murphy discovered a completely different Portugal. The region was flat, the fields uncultivated and the inhabitants few and far between. He refers to the difficulty of the journey, which was «like crossing a vast sandy desert»: one could easily lose one's way. Murphy refers to the importance of pig-raising in the region, swineherds being some of the few inhabitants he encountered. Travelling on to Évora, there are few references to the landscape; the city, located in the middle of the province of the Alentejo on a hill which rises from a beautiful plane, the region produced wheat, wine and olive oil; he makes reference to the founders of the city (the Celts and the Romans) and describes the ruins he found there.

One of the most interesting accounts of the Alentejo landscape was produced by Heinrich Link, a highly-regarded German naturalist<sup>9</sup> who visited Portugal from 1797 to 1799 in the company of Count von Hoffmansegg<sup>10</sup>, providing us with detailed and erudite descriptions mainly from the perspective of botany and natural science, while providing suggestions on how the land could be used to greater advantage. His journey coincided with the unfolding of great events which changed the history of Europe, especially in the political arena, and is also relevant to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, dominated by interest in science and the spread of knowledge about new discoveries. Indeed, the illuminist spirit and approaches to research, questioning and discovery, characteristic features of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, led to the establishment of scientific academies with geographical societies marking out their space side by side with their counterparts in the fields of History and Literature. Describing, enumerating and classifying series and species of fauna and flora became the common practice, particularly among the naturalists who

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<sup>7</sup> W. BECKFORD, *A corte da Rainha D. Maria I*, (anonymous translation), Lisboa, Livraria Editora Tavares Cardoso & Irmão.

<sup>8</sup> J. MURPHY, *Voyage en Portugal a Travers les Provinces D'Entre Douro et Minho, de Beira, D'Estremadure et D'Alenteju dans les Années 1789 et 1790*, Paris, Chez Denné Jeune, 1797.

<sup>9</sup> H. F. LINK, *Notas de uma viagem a Portugal através de França e Espanha*, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> In the preface to his work, Link describes him as a patron of Natural History, and the aim of the journey was to collect material on Portuguese flora and fauna.

provided the foundations of modern biology, usually travellers who related their experiences and described their expeditions in travel accounts. The context of Link accounts provides the material for the description of the landscape of the coeval Alentejo. Our basic premise is the idea that the landscape is only considered as such when not regarded as a feature of the quotidian, implying the need for observation and separation, and is transported to an aesthetic dimension, not associated only with a strictly economic outlook.

In an overall description of the Alentejo, besides noting its size (approximately 36 leagues long, with nearly the same width), he refers to the quality of its soils: in the areas of Elvas, Campo Maior, Olivenza, Fronteira, Estremoz, Beja and Serpa the black and red soils are fertile, while the areas of Évora and Arraiolos the soils are thinner and sandier. Agricultural production featured Galician wheat, barley and rye, together with *montados*, but in areas such as Vendas Novas and Ponte de Sôr heath-land predominated, and there was good fishing (there was little clay on the surface of the soils, and so they were not so fertile).

Link advises the planting of trees to help combat the effects of regular flooding and establish a fixed course for rivers, the planting of cork-oaks and pines on the heaths in order to make better use of them and the plantation of walnut-trees in the Ossa Hills. He encourages beekeeping as a great source of potential for wealth-creation through the export of honey and wax, but found the region dominated by vineyards and wheat-fields, and there was a lack of basic infrastructures in the region for the success of such a scheme.

He is enchanted by the beauty of the heath-land in spring, covered in heather and rock-rose, comparing the region favourably with the countryside of Germany and England. He praises the variety of the plants, describing some species in detail (in terms of growth, variants and scent): the reddish heather (*erica australis* and *erica umbellata*); rock-rose (*cistus helimifolius*, *lasianthus*, *libanotis*, *crispus* and *verticallicatus*), the most common species found on the heaths, yellow or white in colour, some with reddish-purple spots; lavender (*lavanda stoechas*); junipers (*juniperus oxycedrus* e *phoenicea*); myrtle (*quercus humilis lam*). He also notes the existence of rare plants and species unknown in his native land.

Link made two journeys in the Alentejo<sup>11</sup> following different routes. On the first of these, travelling west from Badajoz to Elvas, Estremoz, Venda do Duque, Arraiolos, Montemor-o-Novo, Vendas Novas, Pégões and Aldeia Galega, he begins by describing the geology of the Elvas region: he encounters white quartz, feldspar and mica, with small quantities of steatite, while the city is built on a granite outcrop, interspersed with limestone and veins of sulphur pyrites. The vegetation is abundant, with large quantities of *Antirrhinum amethystinum*: « Les boutons et les feuilles sont couverts d'une résine odoriférante, et répandent, surtout le soir, une odeur très agréable dans leur voisinage »<sup>12</sup>.

On the way from Elvas to Estremoz, the landscape changes: isolated houses and arid hills are a feature of the countryside, covered with brush, particularly rock-rose (*Cistus ladaniferus*), and veins of schist and quartz are visible. Leaving Estremoz, the landscape is once again more pleasant and cultivated: there are abundant olive-groves, and a feature of the landscape is the low white or black limestone hills, with marble quarries. The aspect of the region is very attractive owing to the rich limestone soils, and the fields are cultivated, with abundant orange-trees and laurels. As he travels on, so the landscape changes to granite and schist hills covered with short scrub and rock-rose, and at Venda do Duque, the location of an inn and a change of horses, there are large areas of Portuguese broom, a characteristic feature of the landscape of southern Spain.

As Link approaches Arraiolos, there is once again more cultivated land on soils which are either granite or schist granite. Uncultivated land once again becomes the norm in the interval between towns, until we reach Montemor-o-Novo, where the traveller is confronted with an enormous cultivated valley surrounded by large outcrops of granite covered with holm-oaks and myrtle, a bush which Link does not particularly appreciate: « Cet arbrisseau n'est pas agréable quand il couvre des contrées entières (...) »<sup>13</sup>. A species of small bush which grows best next to water courses, according to Link, it was very common in Portugal.

<sup>11</sup> H. F. LINK, *Voyage en Portugal depuis 1797 jusqu'en 1799*, Paris, Levrault, Schoell, 1803.

<sup>12</sup> *Ivi*, p. 186.

<sup>13</sup> *Ivi*, p. 190.

Montemor-o-Novo is described as being set on granite hills and surrounded by meadows and fields, and just outside the city, on the way to Lisbon, some fine gardens are noted. Travelling on, Link encounters a large area of holm-oaks, which he makes a point of classifying as *Quercus Ilex* and designates as *chêne vert*, according to Link the richest resource in the region, acorns being of fundamental importance for the local economy:

(...) Cet arbre fait la richesse de la contrée, et la nourriture de grand quantité d'animaux. (...) Quarante alqueires de ce fruit font le même profit que soixante alqueires des frites du liège: les hommes les mangent grillés, et ils n'ont point un goût désagréable. (...) <sup>14</sup>.

However, he criticises the negligence with which both the trees and their fruit are treated.

About one league after Montemor, before reaching Vendas Novas, there are hills of granite, giving way to a vast sandy and stony plane which extends as far as Aldeia Galega on the bank of the Tagus. On the route from Montemor to Aldeia Galega, over a distance of approximately eleven leagues, apart from the Vendas Novas and Pegões areas, there are no settlements, just brush, pine-trees, bushes and a few signs of cultivation.

On his second journey, Link travelled north through the southern Alentejo from the Algarve: from Aldeia do Espírito Santo to Mértola, Serpa, Beja, Vidigueira and Évora <sup>15</sup>. Arriving at Mértola, an isolated settlement situated among rocky outcrops, he describes a landscape of wild and deserted hills, the habitat of some rare plants, with a stream watering a small area of fertile land on which wheat was grown.

Travelling on to Serpa, crossing the Guadiana, he came across a landscape even more desert-like due to the arid landscape; there were few houses and very little cultivated land:

(...) To the left of the road is the Pulo do Lobo, where the Guadiana forces its way between narrow rocks. This name, which signifies the wolf's-leap, reminded us of the horse-leap in the Hartz Mountains in Germany (...). About a league before we arrived at Serpa, the prospect changed. The cistus gave place to pastures and fine woods of ever-green oaks and close to Serpa are fruitful corn fields. (...) <sup>16</sup>.

Further on, sandstone and shale hills were covered with rock-rose and the region seemed more fertile, but with so few inhabitants what potential for cultivation existed was unexploited. According to Link, the scent of rock-rose instilled in the people of the region an air of calm and serenity, far from the hurly-burly of the everyday life. The author refers to the practice of burning bushes to clear the land, which was common in Spain, and to the use of spontaneous plants, such as thistles (*Cynara silvestris* Lamark) in the making of cheese. Not far from Serpa, the landscape changed: the groves of holm-oaks, pasture-land and cultivated fields replaced the brush:

(...) We crossed the Guadiana to go to Serpa, a town seven leagues from Mertola on the opposite side of the river. A more extensive desert does not perhaps exist in Portugal; at first we only saw a couple of houses and some fields, then another half way, but everywhere else till within a league of Serpa only hills and mountains of sandstone and argillaceous flate covered with cistus ladaniferus; nor did we meet any man in this desert. At a distance to the eastward we saw many chains of mountains which join the spanish Sierra Morena. It is difficult to communicate the impression made by such a view; the uniformity it presents exceeds everything I have seen; yet the cistus ladaniferus spreads a pleasant balmy perfume, its majestic flowers charm the traveler, and the road is as hard and convenient as the floor of a room. It is a uniformity which with a clear sky and serene mind imparts that pleasing sensation which we feel when far removed from the noise of the world. (...) <sup>17</sup>.

Link travels on to Beja, a city « (...) situated on a gentle hill in a fertile country rich in corn (...) », and from there to Vidigueira, a region blessed by fertile soils and beautiful countryside, although there are some contrasts - fertile valleys full of small farms and orange groves, and isolated farmsteads situated on small farms:

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<sup>14</sup> Ivi, pp. 190-191.

<sup>15</sup> LINK, *Notas de uma viagem a Portugal...*, Lisboa, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> LINK, *Travels in Portugal, and through France and Spain*, London, 1801, p. 467.

<sup>17</sup> Ivi, pp. 465-466.

(...) Vidigueira (...) is a small marked-town or villa, in an extremely charming country. On one side is the fertile plain, on the other immediately beyond, and close to the town rise mountains, the valleys of which are adorned with quintas and orange-gardens, and a large gothic church on the foreground improves the gaiety of the scene. Everything has a tranquil cheerful appearance, and the traveler is richly compensated for the desert wastes of the cheerful Alemtejo. (...) The oranges are small, but uncommonly well-flavored, and may be considered the best in the country, as is the wine also from the neighboring Villa de Trades [sic] (...) <sup>18</sup>.

With regard to Évora, he relates that as he approaches the city the soils become increasingly infertile and of increasingly poor quality:

(...) To the right is the Serra de Ossa, a fertile and on one side well cultivated range of mountains, with a rich monastery of Paulists. (...) We perceived Evora at a great distance, as it is situated on an eminence. The nearer we approached this town, the worse was the cultivation. But can this arise from the quality of the soil? Or can innumerable monastic towers, that vainly seek to approximate to heaven, compensate mankind for the beauties of a rich cultivation? (...) The town consists of narrow crooked streets full of angles, with high gothic buildings and a number of old gothic churches, by which it is much distinguished from most other towns in this kingdom, where the houses are indeed small and low, but by no means in that old style of building so common in Germany; so that the traveller may here imagine himself arrived in a german imperial town. (...) <sup>19</sup>.

## Conclusions

Using travel accounts as historical source, we must take into account the way in which methods of travel evolved over time with the adoption of different means of transport and itineraries chosen; the type of travellers and the transition from travel limited to an “elite” to tourist travel available to ever wider social groups; the travel aims: political and military espionage, educational purposes, or leisure, and also the travellers’ place of birth, social background, education and profession, because these factors determining the way in which travel accounts were written.

In the South of Portugal, and generally in the Iberian Peninsula, we find different types of visitors in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: the intellectuals and scholars (François de Tours, Giuseppe Baretti, James Murphy, Robert Southey, Karl Israel Ruders, Heinrich Link); the adventure travellers, who had specific aims as they were involved in espionage: the attempt to find out about the military capability of the country (Gorani, Dumouriez, Costigan) and members of the European cosmopolitan aristocracy (William Beckford, Carrère, the Marquis of Bombelles).

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<sup>18</sup> *Ivi*, p. 469.

<sup>19</sup> *Ivi*, pp. 470-471.

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