Carl Thompson

**Journeys to Authority: Reassessing Women’s Early Travel Writing, 1763-1862[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Women have had the audacity to venture beyond the composition of trashy novels and poetry. They have written travels, like Mrs Graham; and essays on political economy, like Miss Martineau and Mrs Loudon.

*Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1835)[[2]](#endnote-1)

I am [. . .] timid in coming before the public in the character of any thing like a tourist. [. . .] A taste for universal knowledge is become so prevalent, that it is not only one, but all the various branches of science which are necessary to confer popularity upon any work under the denomination of a Tour.

Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *Summer Excursions through*

*Parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire,*

*Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire,*

*Derbyshire and South Wales* (1809)[[3]](#endnote-2)

The rise of the woman travel writer in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been well documented and much investigated in recent years. The 1980s witnessed several pioneering anthologies of women’s early travel writing, amply demonstrating an extensive female tradition in what many had assumed to be an overwhelmingly – perhaps inherently – masculine genre.[[4]](#endnote-3) The 1990s then saw a wave of seminal literary-critical and theoretical work on this topic, by Sara Mills, Mary Louise Pratt, Maria Frawley, Elizabeth Bohls, Susan Morgan and others.[[5]](#endnote-4) Since 2000, books and articles on women’s travel and travel writing have proliferated, with researchers extending the paradigms and perspectives established by the 1990s scholarship to many different branches and concatenations of the genre.[[6]](#endnote-5) Important primary texts have also become available again in the last two decades, with publishers reissuing a broad range of pre-1900 travel accounts by women both in popular imprints such as Virago and in scholarly editions such as the Chawton House Library series.[[7]](#endnote-6) Contemporaneously, the dramatic growth in digital resources such as Google Books and Eighteenth Century Collection Online (ECCO) have made increasingly accessible those texts that remain out of print.

This sustained attention to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women’s travel writing has not only extended our knowledge but also greatly nuanced our understanding of women’s contributions to the genre. Some of the more simplistic assumptions originally pertaining to this material have been overturned or significantly qualified. The early stereotype was of a few eccentric, exceptional “spinsters abroad” overtly rebelling against the gender constraints of Georgian and Victorian society; this has given way to recognition of the many women travellers across the period, the diverse contexts in which they travelled, and the variety of modes, itineraries and attitudes they espoused. The rather utopian hope, in the first wave of feminist recovery, that women might be innately opposed to imperialism, and more sympathetic than men to colonialism’s victims, has been largely disproved; yet a series of adroit analyses have simultaneously demonstrated how the hierarchies of empire were undoubtedly more fraught and complex for women to negotiate, by virtue of their being (in Indira Ghose’s influential formulation) at once “colonized by gender, but colonizers by race”.[[8]](#endnote-7) Similar adjustments have been made with regard to the essentializing tendency in some of the early criticism. Rather than assuming that women will invariably travel, and recount their travels, in a fundamentally different way from men, scholars now recognize that an individual’s experience and representation of travel is shaped by multiple, intersectional factors, including not only gender but also “race, age, class and financial position, education, political ideals and historical period”.[[9]](#endnote-8) Many of these variables may be shared with male writers; in some contexts, accordingly, it is important to emphasize not so much the differences as the affinities and parallels between male- and female-authored travelogues. Yet whatever the similarities between men and women in these regards, women travel writers were undoubtedly often received and treated differently by editors, publishers, reviewers and readers. Frequently pigeonholed under the patronizing label of “lady traveller”, women faced satire or outright censure if they appeared to overstep the norms of contemporary femininity. An awareness that this might be their fate consequently informed many women’s writing up of their travel experiences, dictating the topics they addressed and prompting – to a greater extent than in male travel writers – strategies of irony, self-deprecation, and what is sometimes dubbed the “modesty topos” (as exemplified in the second epigraph above). So while few scholars now recognize essential differences between male and female travel writers, most acknowledge that cultural constraints exercised a powerful shaping influence on women’s accounts, generating a degree of *de facto* difference from male-authored narratives and justifying today some consideration of women’s travel writing as a distinct strand within the genre as a whole.

Since the 1990s, then, scholarship on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women’s travel writing has worked to question and refine many early assumptions about the form. This Special Issue aims in various ways to continue this process of productive qualification and complication. The agenda is not one of outright revision of existing paradigms in the field, but rather recalibration of some pervasive, arguably dominant ideas about women’s travel writing in this early phase. The stimulus to this recalibration is partly Benjamin Colbert’s ground-breaking bibliographical work, as embodied in the online *Database of Women’s Travel Writings, 1780-1840* (*DWTW*) and summarized in Colbert’s contribution to the present volume. And it is partly some important recent revaluations of, firstly, the nature and function of travel writing in the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century; secondly, the distinctive and to modern eyes unfamiliar *modus operandi* of intellectual culture across this period. These new insights establish important new contexts for the study of women travel writers and their texts; taken together, they point the way to a subtle reorientation or expansion of the field’s customary critical approaches. The latter have to date generally involved either postcolonialist analysis, which scrutinizes women’s travel accounts for their depiction of a range of subordinate, colonial others and their replication or contestation of imperial, Orientalist ideologies; and/or analysis of women’s travel writing as a form of autobiographical life writing, to be investigated for what it reveals of the complex “subject position” of the writer. Both are undoubtedly valid and important considerations for all forms of travel writing. Yet as Katherine Turner and Zoe Kinsley have argued, over-concentration on these postcolonial and autobiographical themes has sometimes obscured the intellectual substance and literary accomplishment of women’s travel writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[[10]](#endnote-9) This collection – like the international conference from which these articles hail, held in Chawton House Library in June 2014 – accordingly prioritizes the public, outward-facing dimensions of women’s travel accounts over their private, psychological determinants. Simultaneously, attention falls less on the colonialist implications of these texts, than on the way they circulated and were received in the writer’s home culture, and on travel writing’s important enabling role for women seeking to participate in a broad range of debates and discourses. Above all, the articles gathered here seek collectively to convey the public influence and agency that women might garner from travel writing, and the genre’s importance as a stepping stone to wider recognition as intellectuals, “women of letters” and cultural commentators. In this way, women’s travel and its subsequent textual representation could become, as signalled by the title of this volume, a “journey to authority”. And the authority thus gained, this Introduction will argue, might be greater than is sometimes assumed.

To begin this process of recalibration, consider the first epigraph above. Here *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* condenses and paraphrases the sentiments expressed in a misogynist volume published earlier that year, entitled *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be* (1835). For the anonymous author of the latter tome, it was “manifestly absurd” that women take up travel writing. As the writer further expostulated, “Must not delicacy – not to speak of other obvious inconveniences – preclude a female from doing literary justice to a *tour*; and, alas! how few travel except in their own dust!”[[11]](#endnote-10) From one perspective, these sentiments tell a story, and frame a context, well-known to anyone who has studied women’s travel writing and its reception in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the anxiety, hostility and chauvinism the form aroused in some quarters are well documented. Scrutinized more closely, however, these quotations, and especially the *Tait’s* review, open up alternative perspectives, prompting in turn an adjustment of some prevailing assumptions about women’s early travel writing.

Firstly, it is worth reflecting on the date of these remonstrances against women travel writers. 1835 seems on the face of it surprisingly late for a commentator to consider female-authored travelogues a shocking *new* development. After all, women had published travel writing in the eighteenth century. The closing decades of the century saw a small flurry of their travel narratives, inspired in part by the success of Mary Wortley Montagu’s posthumously published *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763). As early as 1777, the *Critical Review* commented that “Letters of female travellers are now become not unusual productions”.[[12]](#endnote-11) Yet the animus felt in 1835 by the author of *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be* becomes more understandable when one correlates his remarks with Colbert’s recent bibliographical investigations. These show that while female-authored travelogues did appear in print in the eighteenth century, they represented, even in the century’s final decades, only a tiny proportion of published “voyages and travels”. It was in the 1820s and 1830s that women began to take up the genre in more substantial numbers, with travel writing becoming, as Linda Peterson has observed, an important medium for a new generation of aspirant women of letters who were often more overtly professionalized than their eighteenth-century precursors.[[13]](#endnote-12) It was presumably this more widespread adoption of the genre by women that triggered the misogynist comments recorded above.

In itself, this is a comparatively minor point. Yet it is worth stressing that on this and several other issues Colbert’s *DWTW* offers researchers a much more secure foundation on which to base claims and observations about the genre. Lacking this solid, contextualizing scholarship, there has inevitably been a tendency in the field for somewhat misleading conclusions and generalizations, formed often on the basis of just a few well-known but arguably atypical works such as Montagu’s *Letters* and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796). Thus it is assumed, in an otherwise fine collection of essays, that the eighteenth century witnessed the “commercial explosion” of women’s travel writing.[[14]](#endnote-13) Colbert’s figures, however, suggest that this is true only in a relative and fairly limited sense, with approximately 30 texts across the last 40 years of the century certainly constituting a dramatic step-up compared to women’s previous appearances in print as travel writers, yet still only comprising a very small presence in the genre overall.[[15]](#endnote-14) As Colbert notes in his article, claims that travel writing was a genre especially accessible to women in this period need to be qualified, at least for the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Certainly this accessibility seems not to have been true of voyages and travels in their published, print formats, although research is beginning to suggest a more substantial “explosion” in the number of unpublished, manuscript travel accounts by women; and as Kinsley has suggested, we need to reassess longstanding assumptions about the latter material, especially the notion that handwritten accounts were always “private” texts circulating solely in domestic contexts.[[16]](#endnote-15) This is a topic I shall return to shortly. For now, however, it is important to note that the *DWTW* gives us the first detailed map of women’s published travel writing across an extended period. In due course (and especially when its parent project, a database of *all* travel writing produced in print across the period, is completed) this map should allow us to reach firmer conclusions not only about the number but also the varieties and characteristic modes of women’s travel accounts. Did women really favour the epistolary format more than male travel writers in this period? Does their travel writing display a more marked use of “sentimental” idioms and perspectives, as sometimes claimed? The *DWTW* should enable clearer answers to these questions, giving us in turn a better grasp on whether (and where) we should emphasize the continuities or contrasts between men and women’s travel writing.

Properly parsed, the comparative paucity of published travelogues by women until well into the nineteenth century brings into focus another set of common misconceptions about both travel writing in general and more specifically women’s contributions to the form. Returning to the first epigraph above, notice how *Tait’s* pairs travel writing with “essays on political economy”. Here they follow the writer of *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be*, who also linked women’s production of travel writing to their writing of history. These linkages remind us that travel writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was very different to its modern-day descendant, in terms of the literary and intellectual expectations attached to the form and its overall cultural status. Travel writing today is generally viewed as a minor literary genre, read principally for personal amusement. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century voyages and travels, however, were certainly a very popular, widely selling form (far more so than modern travel writing), yet in the age of Cook, Darwin, Mungo Park, Arthur Young, William Gilpin and many others the genre was simultaneously a vital medium for debate and dissemination across a broad range of disciplines and discourses. As Katherine Turner, Nigel Leask and Robin Jarvis have emphasized, until well into the nineteenth century what readers principally demanded of voyages and travels was reasonably well-informed, factual reportage across a variety of topics; mere frivolity, ostentatious elegance in the writing and excessive sentimental exploration of the writer’s personal feelings were all liable to be dismissed as self-indulgent.[[17]](#endnote-16) Much travel writing was certainly occasional, amateur and generalist in nature, rather than the work of dedicated or specialist knowledge-workers; yet as Turner notes, for many readers this only heightened its value as an honest empirical record, seemingly unspun by any sort of vested interest or polemical intent.[[18]](#endnote-17) It is also true that not every travelogue was equally successful in fulfilling contemporary expectations that the form should provide useful information; as a consequence, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a proliferation of complaints alleging a decline in the genre’s intellectual value.[[19]](#endnote-18) Yet these complaints signal simultaneously the standard to which travel writing was still routinely held, and its status as an important “knowledge genre”.[[20]](#endnote-19) This status is further indicated by the second epigraph above, in which Elizabeth Isabella Spence expresses her hesitation about appearing in print as a “tourist” – but not because of any perceived superficiality or frivolity in either her travelling or her subsequent writing, as our modern notions of both tourism and travel writing might suggest. Rather, it is the range of knowledge required of tourists and travel writers, and the expertise in “various branches of science”, that she emphasizes.

Hence the distinction, in the quotation from *Tait’s*, between literary forms like “trashy novels and poetry” and what are evidently regarded as more weighty non-fictional genres like travel writing and political economy. Recognition of this distinction, and of the greater intellectual prestige thus attaching to travel writing in this period, has bearing in several ways on our evaluation of women’s work in the genre. Most obviously, it helps to explain women’s only limited presence as travel writers in the fully public sphere of print. Scholars have of course long recognized that women faced significant obstacles in taking up the genre, from both male gatekeepers and their own understandable caution in adopting a potentially provocative authorial persona.[[21]](#endnote-20) Yet we have perhaps underestimated the extent to which the role of travel writer constituted in this period a conspicuous claim of, and bid for, cultural and intellectual authority. More significantly, we have arguably underestimated the authority implicitly asserted and achieved when women did publish travelogues. Evident in many scholarly assessments of these texts, one senses, is an anachronistic understanding of the form based on attitudes to modern travel writing. Jacqueline Pearson, for example, finds it surprising that travel writing regularly seems to be regarded, and recommended, as acceptable reading for women in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, alongside genres like history. Her further comments reveal, however, that that surprise is rooted in a modern understanding of travel writing as an “escapist” rather than educative and improving form.[[22]](#endnote-21) Similarly, Sarah Richardson in an excellent study of Victorian women’s political activism comments that “women employed genre as unlikely as travel writing and domestic economy to engage their readership with the key political, economic and social issues of the time”.[[23]](#endnote-22) Modern travel writing might be an unlikely form to use for such discussions; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century voyages and travels were precisely the genre many readers went to, and respected, for information and commentary on these issues, as evidenced in the domestic context by the work of figures like Young and William Cobbett and in the overseas context by the many commentaries offered by travellers on the public affairs of other nations. Similarly with topics like natural history, aesthetics and connoisseurship: these were all fields in which travel writing had a well-established role in both public discussion and more specialized disciplinary debates (and as we shortly see, this was also a period in which there was no sharp boundary between these two discursive spheres).

Misjudging travel writing’s importance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then, we may undervalue the significance and influence of the work women produced in the genre. This tendency is often compounded by another, closely related misconception about the era. Recent scholarship has quite rightly emphasized what Turner terms the “discursive heterogeneity” of women’s travel writing in this period, and the opportunity the genre gave them of engaging with a broad range of disciplines and discourses; Spence, for example, includes “arts, antiquities, and history” and “natural or historical anecdotes” among the themes a good travelogue needs to address.[[24]](#endnote-23) Yet when discussing their treatment of some of these topics – those we now regard as strongly marked as masculine domains in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example science, politics and economics – there is a tendency to assume that women could only have been very marginal commentators on these issues, necessarily positioned outside major circuits of knowledge production and opinion formation. Thus Kinsley comments that while travel writing encouraged women to conduct empirical investigations into many topics, “disciplines such as aesthetics, antiquarianism, geography and science” nevertheless remained “closed to women at anything other than an amateur level”.[[25]](#endnote-24) It is for this reason, many critics strongly imply, that women turned to travel writing as a medium to engage with these disciplines. The genre, it is assumed, let them engage with a range of wider debates under the radar, as it were, without risking the stronger and potentially more controversial assertion of authority that might come from publication of a formal treatise or study; yet by the same token, this roundabout strategy seemingly signals the extent to which they were excluded from the principal sites and modes of discussion in these fields.

As we have seen, however, travel writing was by no means a peripheral or ancillary medium for many disciplines in this period. Similarly, recent work in the history of several disciplines (most notably, the history of science) has brought into question the validity and usefulness of the “amateur”/”professional” distinction for many areas of intellectual endeavour at this date. This was, for example, an age of what has been dubbed “gentlemanly science”, when most leading figures were not paid professionals, but rather men of private means who undertook their intellectual enquiries for pleasure, or from a sense of social responsibility, rather than for remuneration. Being “amateur” in this original sense of the word did not preclude great expertise and advanced specialist knowledge in specific areas. At the same time, many disciplines were not yet so specialized as to erect an insurmountable barrier between experts and (to use the terminology of a later era) “lay-people”. As James Secord has written of science in the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century,

a division between “specialist” and “popular” science [. . .] is inappropriate to understanding a period when people differing in gender, rank and depth of expertise not only talked about science but in so doing contributed directly to its making.[[26]](#endnote-25)

Recent research has uncovered flourishing cultures of both artisanal and “polite” science, in which individuals from all walks of life pursued a range of scientific enquiries and then met sociably, across a broad spectrum of social gatherings, to share thoughts and findings.[[27]](#endnote-26) These activities did not go on in parallel alongside what one might mistakenly dub the “real” science of major figures like Sir Joseph Banks, Charles Lyell and Darwin. The latter may have done the most to drive their disciplines forward through the development of new theories and interpretations, yet their work was usually conducted very much in and through this culture of “polite” science, with leading thinkers constantly in dialogue with, and drawing data and ideas from, a wider array of science enthusiasts.

As the nineteenth century wore on, the sciences and many other disciplines became more institutionalized and specialized, with university-level education increasingly a prerequisite for meaningful work in most areas (a development which also saw a decline in travel writing’s intellectual prestige, as many disciplines established forms of publication and dissemination which defined themselves in contradistinction to what was now perceived as the amateurism and anecdotalism of “voyages and travels”). Prior to this, however, the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scientific community was more variegated and loosely networked than it would later become. In this landscape, there was greater opportunity than we sometimes imagine for women to not only pursue scientific interests but also develop those interests and feed back their own findings through close contact with major figures. Two women, for example, were at the heart of London’s scientific community in the early nineteenth century, with the homes of Mary Somerville and Jane Marcet, in Hanover Square and Harley Street respectively, being a regular meeting-place for leading scientists.[[28]](#endnote-27) As the novelist Maria Edgeworth wrote in 1822, “all the best scientific and literary society in London drop into these two houses daily”.[[29]](#endnote-28) Somerville and Marcet, it must be stressed, were not simply hostesses or salonnières, orchestrating the activities and conversations of their (male) guests. Rather, they participated fully as “all kinds of scientific subjects were discussed, experiments tried and astronomical observations made in a little garden in front of the house”.[[30]](#endnote-29) These activities then informed their own published writings on science. Marcet authored a series of influential educational works for children; Somerville wrote up some of their experiments into research papers, produced an acclaimed translation of Pierre Simon Laplace’s *The Mechanism of the Heavens* and published several well-received works synthesizing the latest scientific thinking across a range of fields.[[31]](#endnote-30)

In going into print in this way, and so acquiring wide public recognition for their scientific expertise, Marcet and Somerville were perhaps somewhat exceptional (though by no means isolated) figures. Yet research has recently uncovered numerous women who replicated in many other regards their close involvement in both metropolitan and provincial science networks.[[32]](#endnote-31) A case in point is the woman referenced in the first epigraph to this introduction, as an example of the apparently deplorable new tendency for women to produce travelogues. Maria Graham (from 1827, after her second marriage, Maria Callcott) should probably be regarded as the first woman to build a whole career specifically in the role of travel writer. While many women had of course published travelogues prior to Graham’s debut publication in 1812, the overwhelming majority of these female travel writers produced just a single account. Graham published an unprecedented four travel narratives in the 1810s and 1820s, along with several related texts which in various ways consolidated her public persona as an accomplished traveller, and it was in this role that she was principally known to the public until she became equally famous as a writer of children’s literature in the 1830s.[[33]](#endnote-32) The novelty of her longstanding and substantial career may be why it was Graham who was chosen by *Tait’s* as the prime example of the new wave of women’s travel writing, even though in 1835 it was more than ten years since her last travelogue (and as noted earlier, the intervening decade had produced many new women travel writers, whom the reviewer might alternatively have referenced). In the present context, however, what matters more is that Graham like many other women travel writers frequently touched on a range of scientific topics in her travel writing. And she did so as someone who was very far from being an “amateur”, in the modern, derogatory sense of the term, on these subjects. Rather, she maintained a keen interest in science, and was linked to sophisticated scientific circles (including the groups associated with Somerville and Marcet) all her adult life. She was an assiduous collector of plant, insect and mineral specimens throughout her travels, with some of the entomological material being passed on to the British Museum. By the time of her third and final visit to Brazil, in 1824-1825, she was in correspondence with the eminent botanist William Hooker, whom she supplied with numerous drawings, seeds and samples (many of which are still archived at Kew Gardens). In 1824, she became the first woman to publish in the leading geological journal of the day, the *Transactions of the Geological Society*, contributing a report of her observations during a major earthquake in Chile in 1822.[[34]](#endnote-33)

The modern associations of “amateur”, then, do not adequately reflect either Graham’s expertise or contribution with regard to contemporary scientific enquiries. Similarly with many of the other fields she habitually addressed in her travel writing. On matters of art history, aesthetics and artistic taste, for example, Graham was again both well informed and well networked, counting figures like Charles Eastlake and Thomas Lawrence amongst her friends and correspondents from the late 1810s. After her second marriage to the painter Augustus Wall Callcott, she moved even more to the centre of the London art world, presiding over her own small but influential salon, and establishing friendships with continental artists and experts like David Passavant and Gustav Waagner.[[35]](#endnote-34) Graham also had extensive knowledge of prior scholarship and current disciplinary debates in social and political history, as I explore in my contribution to the current volume. Again, this knowledge was generated both through wide reading and from close personal contact with leading figures in the field.

The diverse strands of Graham’s career, and the networks she developed around her various interests, reflect an intellectual culture that was more fluid and less stratified than modern critics often assume. Disciplines were not as clearly segregated as they are today, with C.P. Snow’s “Two Cultures” divide between arts and sciences only beginning to emerge. And crucially, across multiple fields, distinctions between amateurs and professionals, enthusiasts and experts were less sharp than they would later become. In this milieu, women were not invariably positioned on the outside of key knowledge networks, nor were they wholly excluded from contemporary scientific, academic or artistic “establishments”. It is true that their presence in such networks, and especially the reputation they were able to acquire beyond these networks among the wider public, might be more precarious because of their gender. Yet ongoing research is throwing up ever more women who acquired considerable expertise in diverse fields – and just as importantly, who were recognized as having this disciplinary expertise, at least among small groups of fellow practitioners. In this way women might contribute to and influence ongoing investigations and discussions. And reports from well-informed women travellers might find in some quarters a congenial, accepting audience, so that they came to constitute meaningful rather than merely marginal interventions in contemporary debate.

It is true that many women’s travel accounts from this period do not seem, to modern eyes, especially expert or authoritative in the commentaries they offer. Few female-authored travelogues can match, in their accumulation of information and overt displays of learning, the more obviously erudite narratives produced by some male contemporaries in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, many women travel writers undoubtedly touch, like Graham, on scientific topics such as botany, zoology and geology, yet they generally handle these topics in a very different way to contemporary explorers like Mungo Park or William Parry. The style and voice are usually less densely scientific, less bristling with footnotes, references and polysyllabic technical terms, and more hedged with apologies for lack of expertise in the fields under discussion. Thus Graham concludes a discussion of new plant species encountered in Chile with the self-deprecating comment, “I am sorry I know so little of botany, because I am really fond of plants [. . . But] what have harsh hundred syllabled names to do with such lovely things as roses, jasmines, and violets?”[[36]](#endnote-35) Yet comparison of Graham with highly specialized explorers like Park and Parry is arguably misleading, and again should not lead us to perceive in science or in other disciplines any absolute schism between (male) “professionals” and (female) “amateurs”, experts and mere enthusiasts. Full-blown exploration narratives stand at one extreme of a broad spectrum of travel texts disseminating scientific and scholarly knowledge. But this spectrum also included many male travellers who undertook more modest enquiries and adopted a comparatively casual, anecdotal and often self-deprecating idiom in their presentation of information.[[37]](#endnote-36) For both male and female travellers, the conversational style and generalist approach of much travel writing reflected the inclusive ethos of intellectual culture of this era; it did not necessarily signify lack of expertise in specific disciplines, nor did it prevent that travel writing being appreciated as a useful contribution to knowledge.

Scholars have of course long realized that women travellers’ disclaimers about lack of expertise often need to be viewed sceptically. Frequently, indeed, such apologia are issued precisely when the writer is displaying proficiency in the area in question. We do not need to know Graham’s connections with eminent botanists like Hooker and Robert Brown to sense she is being disingenuous when she declares her ignorance of botany; it comes after a passage of well-informed botanical discussion lightly laced with the technical terminology Graham claims not to know. But we have perhaps underestimated the extent to which this casual, self-deprecating style was an accepted mode of intellectual exchange in the period. Thus one review of Graham’s Chile travelogue drew readers’ attention specifically to the interesting botanical information contained in the passage just described, evidently untroubled by Graham’s claim to be poorly trained in this area.[[38]](#endnote-37)

Also salient here is recent research stressing the importance, in the intellectual culture of the eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries, of scribal and oral modes of communication. Modern scholars tend to prioritize print as the principal medium of scholarly and scientific exchange, and as the key marker of the origination and ownership of ideas and theories. Yet this is to some extent anachronistic. Publication could of course be an important event in the production and dissemination of knowledge, yet until well into the nineteenth century it was not the only mechanism by which information was shared and reputations established. As Secord has pointed out, there were major figures in science in this earlier era who hardly published at all. A notable example is Sir Joseph Banks, whose central, coordinating role in many branches of British science was achieved and maintained largely through a correspondence network that spanned the whole globe, and through constant conversation with other experts in a variety of social settings.

The conversational and scribal dimensions of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century intellectual life have bearing in two main ways on our understanding and evaluation of women’s travel writing from this era. Firstly, as alluded to earlier, this was a milieu in which manuscript accounts of travel could function as significant contributions to contemporary debate. Non-publication was not inherently the mark of the “amateur” or marginalized commentator, nor did it necessarily signify a wholly private text or one aimed at just a small, domestic audience. Stressing that production of manuscript documents should not be regarded “as an unenviable position enforced upon a writer” but rather “as a mode of literary dissemination that can be actively chosen for any number of reasons, by men as well as women”, Kinsley identifies several women whose handwritten travelogues circulated among important intellectual coteries.[[39]](#endnote-38) These include Katherine Plymley, who was associated with figures like Gilpin and Thomas Pennant, and Dorothy Richardson, who was part of a Yorkshire Enlightenment circle and whose historical, topographical and antiquarian investigations contributed to Thomas Dunham Whitaker’s *History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven in the County of York* (1805).[[40]](#endnote-39) For women like this, manuscript circulation was probably a means of dissociating themselves from what many perceived as the vulgar commercialism of print culture; they may also have felt safer exercising authority and influence within what one might regard as the “semi-public sphere” of an extended network of friends and associates, rather than in the fully public sphere of print.

This interplay between public and semi-public spheres, and the conversational tenor of many branches of intellectual life, also influenced the tone and content of published travelogues by women. It encouraged the casual style outlined above, in which learning was worn lightly rather than ostentatiously displayed, and it enabled other strategies by which women might contribute ongoing scientific and scholarly discussions without appearing too overtly learned in the fully public medium of print. At many points in her travel writing, for example, Graham reveals familiarity with current theoretical debates across a variety of disciplines, but does so without engaging those debates directly in her text. In Chile, she quizzes an educated local about his knowledge of earthquakes in the region, garnering information which she suggests “contradict[s] some theories about situations, soils, &c”.[[41]](#endnote-40) That information and its theoretical relevance is not spelled out in any detail in the published text, and so to modern eyes Graham’s writing here will not seem in any way scientific or scholarly. However, in an era when print might serve as an adjunct to other modes of communication, this passage arguably serves as a sort of calling card, alerting the wider geological community to the fact Graham had data they might find useful, and which might be gleaned through direct application to the author herself, via correspondence or conversation. It was these informal networks of communication which led to Graham’s more formal writing up of a report on her own earthquake experiences for the *Transactions of the Geological Society*. The article’s headnote informs us that this account was requested by the geologist Henry Warburton; like Graham, Warburton was a regular attendee at the London homes of Somerville and Marcet, and it was presumably through these intermediaries that geologist and traveller were put in contact, if they did not know each other already. The same networks would also have been interested to read, in Graham’s published Brazil journal, that a local informant had given her “several specimens of amethyst”, “the stone called minha nova (like aqua marine)”, and “a fine piece of gold ore” from the Pernambuco region, along with information about local fossil discoveries.[[42]](#endnote-41) Again, these gifts and the accompanying conversation are baldly summarized in print by Graham, without any scientific commentary; in the context of the highly sociable science of this period, however, passages like this may nevertheless have served a scientific function, posting notice of useful specimens and information garnered by the traveller.

In this way, many travelogues by women possess a more complex, manifold valence than we tend to recognize today. Juggling conversational and technical idioms, mediating between public and semi-public spheres and their associated modes of communication, travel writing was a genre in which women might play a sophisticated double game, at once exhibiting yet also disclaiming authority, simultaneously speaking knowledgeably to congenial audiences while shielding themselves from attacks by chauvinist readers hostile to overt displays of female learning. This “double voiced” quality to women’s travel writing has again long been acknowledged by critics, since at least the time of Sara Mills’ seminal *Discourses of Difference* (1991). Yet discussion of this tendency has generally emphasized double voicing as a strategy of subterfuge and subversion, forced upon women by their marginalization from authoritative discourse. Less attention has been paid to its enabling aspects, or to the reception and influence of these texts among readers willing and able to appreciate the substantive information they contained. Graham’s travel writing certainly found such readers, both within her personal networks of friends and associates and among the wider public. As noted earlier, across diverse fields and disciplines she was a well-connected and respected figure, as indicated by the praise she garnered (both in private communications and in print) from figures like Hooker, Lawrence and Eastlake.[[43]](#endnote-42) She was also frequently acclaimed in contemporary magazines and journals, receiving many fulsome reviews. In 1820, indeed, the *Monthly Magazine* nominated her as one of twenty-four examples of contemporary “female genius”, alongside figures such as Hannah More, Anne Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth, Joanna Baillie and Helen Maria Williams.[[44]](#endnote-43)

This brings us to a final critical orthodoxy about women’s travel writing which needs perhaps to be recalibrated. For understandable reasons, scholars concerned to rescue women travel writers from obscurity have generally emphasized the hostile reviews they sometimes received, and the suspicion aroused in some quarters by the travelling, commentating woman. This potential hostility needs always to be kept in mind, and of course explains the circuitous strategies of style and presentation outlined above. During her career, Graham came in for plenty of patronizing and sometimes actively aggressive reviews, especially when she was perceived to have abandoned feminine propriety by offering her thoughts on politics, economics and history; I give some examples in the article contained here. But these hostile reviews are not the whole story of Graham’s reception. Her travel writing, and her innovative career as a whole, took shape within a more variegated literary and journalistic landscape, in which there were many public voices prepared to speak up for women’s travel writing. If the *Monthly Magazine* categorized Graham as a woman of genius, the *Eclectic Review* assessed her thus:

Women are said, we think with justice, to be the best letter writers; and we should be tempted to assign to them the praise of being the best tourists, had we a few more female writers like Maria Graham to adduce in support of the assertion.[[45]](#endnote-44)

As in the epigraph from Spence at the start of this Introduction, the term “tourist” here does not yet carry its modern, negative connotations. The *Eclectic* is not being condescending to Graham, nor is it praising her solely as a “literary” author purveying fine, elegant writing. Rather, here and elsewhere she is frequently praised for the knowledge content of her travelogues, and the useful information she provides across diverse fields. Thus the *Monthly Review*, in lauding Graham as a superior travel writer to Madame de Stael, commented on her “sagacity of observation” and “scientific acquirement”.[[46]](#endnote-45) Other reviews paid Graham the implicit compliment of reprinting long excerpts from her accounts (as was common practice in the reviewing of travelogues in this period).

Thus there were not only important intellectual networks which welcomed women travellers and accepted contributions from them, there were also reviewers and other public commentators who looked favourably on women’s travel writing and argued for its usefulness. My first epigraph, from *Tait’s*, further illustrates this. Although the reviewer here – probably Christian Isobel Johnstone – appears superficially to be castigating women travel writers, in fact she is paraphrasing the argument of *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be* only to denounce it as misogynistic and old-fashioned. In this context, the fact that Graham is chosen as the prime example of the new women’s travel writing, even though it was more than a decade since her last travelogue, is probably a further example of the esteem in which she was held; it may also reflect contemporary recognition of her trail-blazing role in forging a whole career as a woman travel writer.

For Graham, then, travel writing was the route to considerable intellectual and cultural authority. It was a medium which allowed her at once to display expertise, secure widespread public acclaim, and not least, contribute to a broad range of contemporary debates and scholarly investigations. And Graham was not an isolated figure in these regards. Obviously not every woman traveller of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was as rigorously engaged in empirical investigation, and as intellectually accomplished, as Graham. Not all disclaimers as to ignorance should be read against the grain; like their male counterparts, some women travellers were more superficial in their analyses and interests than others. Yet Graham was undoubtedly preceded by numerous women who wrote less extensively in the genre, but whose travelogues nevertheless exhibit considerable erudition and accumulate useful information, the influence of which has yet properly to be traced. Examples include Jemima Kindersley, Maria Riddell, Anna Miller, and Anne Plumptre.[[47]](#endnote-46) Graham was then followed by many women who not only made travel writing the whole or a substantial part of their authorial careers, but who also utilized the genre to become important public commentators across a range of topics and disciplines: examples include Anna Jameson, Harriet Martineau, Louisa Stuart Costello and Julia Pardoe.[[48]](#endnote-47) Traditional intellectual and disciplinary histories often occluded these women, out of a dual disdain for both for women thinkers and the now misunderstood genre of travel writing. Feminist scholars have quite rightly begun the process of rescuing women travel writers from undeserved obscurity – yet even feminist recovery research runs the risk of underplaying their influence and accomplishment, if it approaches women’s travel writing with anachronistic assumptions about both the genre and the larger intellectual culture in which it circulated.

The articles in this volume address in diverse ways women’s travel writing and the authority the genre could confer. As discussed already, Benjamin Colbert’s contribution teases out the implications of his bibliographical research, and provides important data which will be a useful foundation for future investigations in this field. Pam Perkins then discusses the career of the travel writer who provides the second epigraph to this Introduction, Elizabeth Isabella Spence. As Perkins shows, Spence like Graham was educated and integrated within sophisticated intellectual and literary networks, principally through a family connection to important (male) figures in Dundee Enlightenment circles. These connections, and travel writing’s traditional information gathering rubric, underwrote the authority of her first two travel books; in her final venture into the genre, however, Spence fashioned “an unusually feminocentric version of the Romantic-era Scottish tour”, foregrounding her links with other women writers in Scotland and frequently mediating the Highlands through prior female rather than male accounts. This was, Perkins suggests, an innovative adjustment of focus, yet it was also, as she demonstrates, a dangerous strategy, which allowed John Wilson in *Blackwood’s Magazine* to subject the volume to a condescending, highly gendered review from which Spence’s reputation has never recovered. The article thus explores alternative modes of authority women travellers might invoke or essay, yet also serves implicitly as a reminder of the complex negotiations required of women seeking to fashion themselves as travel writers, and the chauvinism and hostility potentially awaiting those who misjudged these matters in the fully public medium of print.

My article explores Maria Graham’s credentials and influence as both travel writer and historian, focussing especially on her final South American travelogues. Like Perkins, I identify a subtly “feminocentric”, indeed feminist dimension to Graham’s travel writing, as it accumulates evidence of – and itself exemplifies – women’s agency and their capacity to intervene in a range of public events and debates. This aspect of her books garnered Graham several hostile reviews. Yet these attacks could not ultimately sink the volumes, or Graham’s reputation, since this feminist agenda was combined with formidable research and learning that made Graham’s accounts of Chile and Brazil important, innovative contributions to the historiography of those two nations. Their significance as exercises in historical writing is often overlooked by modern critics, who read these texts principally as forms of “life writing”; yet as the article shows, this is to occlude a key part of their original valence and achievement, as demonstrated by the many positive reviews Graham received at the time of publication, and the respect accorded her by contemporary historians.

Another woman travel writer who achieved considerable public authority, even as she received some hostile reviews, was Harriet Martineau. Teja Verma Pujapati’s article sheds light on one of the less well-known facets of Martineau’s wide-ranging career, her pioneering role as a Foreign Correspondent in Ireland for the *Daily News*. As Pujapati demonstrates, Martineau’s correspondence from Ireland – later consolidated in book form as *Letters from Ireland* (1852) – of necessity addressed head-on ostensibly “masculine” topics of politics and economics. Even more emphatically than Graham in South America, Martineau’s travel writing offered a public demonstration of her expertise in these fields, an expertise that was also combined with a willingness to proffer her own policy recommendations. In this way she not only asserted women’s competence as travel writers, but also helped to forge new possibilities for women in journalism, paving the way for later female Foreign Correspondents like Frances Power Cobbe.

Finally, Hannah Sikstrom’s article reminds us of the ongoing intellectual importance, until well into the nineteenth century, of the manuscript travel account. Once again, the private journals maintained by Susan Horner during visits to Italy in the 1840s and 1860s should not be understood solely, or even principally, as exercises in “life writing”. Rather, the researches recorded in these handwritten notebooks – research which would feed eventually into *Walks in Florence and its Environs* (1873), the scholarly and well received guidebook Horner co-wrote with her sister – constitute a rigorous, well-informed amassing of information by another woman traveller who was erudite and closely connected to important intellectual circles of the day.

1. This article © Carl Thompson. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Notes**

   *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* 2 (1835): 712. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. Elizabeth Spence, *Summer Excursions through Parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Derbyshire and South Wales*, 2 vols. in 1 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809) vi-vii. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. Early anthologies include Leo Hamalian, ed., *Ladies on the Loose: Women Travellers of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1981), Mary Russell, ed., *The Blessings of a Good, Thick Skirt* (London: Collins, 1988), Dea Birkett, ed., *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), Jane Robinson, ed., *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), Mary Morris and Larry O’Connor, eds., *The Virago Book of Women Travellers* (London: Virago, 1996). More recent, and far more nuanced in its interpretive frameworks, is Shirley Foster and Sara Mills, eds., *An Anthology of Women’s Travel Writing* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
5. Studies from the 1990s either wholly devoted to pre-1900 women’s travel writing, or containing substantial sections addressing this material, include: Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), Billie Melman, *Women’s Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan Press, 1991), Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*, 1716-1818 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), Karen Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1994), Maria Frawley, *A Wider Range: Travel Writing by Women in Victorian England* (London: Associated Universities Press, 1994), Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guildford Press, 1994), Susan Morgan, *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women’s Travel Books about Southeast Asia* (1996), Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (London: Leicester UP, 1996), Indira Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
6. Significant book-length studies of women’s travel writing published since 2000 include: Cheryl McEwan, *Gender, Geography and Empire: Victorian Women Travellers in East Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), Mirella Agorni, *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century: British Women, Translation and Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), Cheryl J. Fish, *Black and White Women’s Travel Narratives; Antebellum Explorations* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2004), Kirsti Siegel, ed., *Gender, Genre and Identity in Women’s Travel Writing* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), Susan Clair Imbarrato, *Traveling Women: Narrative Visions of Early America* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2006), Monica Anderson, *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1870-1914* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2006), Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman, *Traveling Economies: American Women’s Travel Writing* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2007), Kate Walchester, *“Our Own Fair Italy”: Nineteenth Century Women’s Travel Writing and Italy, 1800-1844* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), Zoe Kinsley, *Women Writing the Home Tour, 1682-1812* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), Lorraine Sterry, *Victorian Women Travellers in Meiji Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), Elizabeth Hagglund, *Tourists and Travellers: Women’s Non-Fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* (Bristol: Channel View, 2010), Susan L. Roberson, *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road: American Mobilities* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), Precious Mackenzie, *The Right Sort of Woman: Victorian Travel Writers and the Fitness of an Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012), Yael Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel After the Enlightenment* (Lanham, MD: Bucknell UP, 2012), Judith Johnston, *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel, Translation and Culture, 1830-1870* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), Adriana Mendez Rodenas, *Transatlantic Travels in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: European Women Pilgrims* (Lanham, MD: Bucknell UP, 2014), Claire Broome Saunders, ed., *Women, Travel Writing and Truth* (London: Routledge, 2014), Kate Walchester, *Gamle Norge and Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Norway* (London: Anthem, 2014), Churnjeet Mahn, *British Women’s Travel to Greece, 1840-1914: Travels in the Palimpsest* (London: Routledge, 2016). Also noteworthy, although not focused solely on women travellers, are Amanda Gilroy, ed., *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), Katherine Turner, *British Travellers in Europe: Authorship, Gender and National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz, eds., *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1660-1820* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014). As in travel writing studies more generally, most of the criticism written in English focuses principally on Anglophone women; for interesting accounts of women travel writers from other traditions, see Karin U. Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon: Travelogues from Colonial Times* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), Dunlaith Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women’s Oriental Travelogues, 1850-1950* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), Keiko Shiba and Motoko Ezaki, *Literary Creations on the Road: Women’s Travel Diaries in Early Modern Japan* (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2012), Jennifer Jenkins Wood, *Spanish Women Travelers at Home and Abroad: From Tierra del Fuego to the Land of the Midnight Sun* (Lanham, MD: Bucknell UP, 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
7. Under the general editorship of Stephen Bygrave and Stephen Bending, the Chawton House Library series has produced multi-volume sets of women’s travel writings to Revolutionary France, Italy, Iberia, Post-Napoleonic France, Africa and the Middle East, and Scotland. A set on India is also currently under contract. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
8. Ghose, *Women Travellers* 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
9. Foster and Mills, *Anthology of Women’s Travel Writing* 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
10. Katherine Turner, “Women’s Travel Writing, 1750-1830”, in Jacqueline Labbe, ed., *The History of British Women’s Writing, 1750-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010) 47-62 (53-4); Kinsley, *Women Writing* 13, 73. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
11. Anon, *Woman: As She Is and As She Should Be*,2 vols. (London: John Cochrane, 1835) 1: 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
12. *Critical Review* 43 (1777): 439. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
13. Linda Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2009) 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
14. Marguerite Helmers and Tilar Mazzeo, eds., *The Traveling and Writing Self* (Cambridge; Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007) 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
15. The *DWTW* references 30 female-authored travelogues between 1780 and 1800, and Colbert in his article here identifies a further 7 such texts between 1760 and 1780. However, Colbert is working to a looser, twentieth-century definition of what counts as “travel writing”; not all of these 37 texts would have been recognized as “voyages and travels” by their original readers (for example, Elizabeth Helme’s *Instructive Rambles* volumes for children). The overall figure for women’s published travelogues between 1690 and 1800 is probably therefore around 40, a number which needs to be set against the estimated 1,400 travelogues produced in total in this period. See Shef Rogers, “Enlarging the Prospects of Happiness: Travel Reading and Travel Writing”, in M.F. Suarez, and M.L. Turner, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 5: 1695-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 781-790 (785). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
16. See Kinsley, *Women Writing* 11-13. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
17. See Turner, *British Travellers*; Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002); Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel: Expeditions and Tours in North America, 1760-1840* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
18. Turner, “Women’s Travel Writing” 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
19. See Ina Ferris, “Mobile Words: Romantic Travel Writing and Print Anxiety”, *Modern Language Quarterly* 60.4 (1999): 451-68. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
20. Ferris 452, 455. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
21. For a nuanced discussion of these obstacles, see Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel* 19-50. Schlick also emphasizes the extent to which travel in this period was perceived as a training for citizenship and political agency. Hence the importance, in the eyes of feminist radicals like Helen Maria Williams and Wollstonecraft, of women taking up the genre – but hence also the opprobrium some commentators heaped on women who appeared in print as travellers. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
22. Jacqueline Pearson, *Women’s Reading in Britain, 1750-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 56. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
23. Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2013) 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
24. Turner, “Women’s Travel Writing” 53; Spence vi. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
25. Kinsley, *Women Writing* 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
26. James Secord, “How Scientific Conversation Became Shop Talk”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (2006): 129-56 (132). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
27. See Anne Secord, “Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire”, History of Science 32 (1994): 269–315; G.V. Sutton, *Science for a Polite Society: Gender, Culture, and the Demonstration of Enlightenment* (Boulder, CO, 1995); Alice N. Walters, “Conversation Pieces: Science and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Britain”, *History of Science* 35 (1997): 121-54; Ralph O’Connor*, The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802-1856* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 217-61. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
28. See Secord, “How Scientific Conversation”. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
29. *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England 1813-1844*, ed. Christina Colvin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 321. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
30. Mary Somerville, *Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age* (London: John Murray, 1873) 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
31. For more on Marcet and Somerville, see Greg Myers, “Fictionality, Demonstration and a Forum for Polite Science: Jane Marcet’s *Conversations on Chemistry*”, in Barbara T. Gates and Anne Shteir, eds., *Natural Eloquence: Women Reinscribe Science* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997) 43-60;S. Bahar, “Jane Marcet and the Limits to Public Science”, *British Journal for the History of Science* 34 (2001): 29-49; Kathryn A. Neeley, *Mary Somerville: Science, Illumination and the Female Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Allan Shepherd, *Mary Somerville and the World of Science* (London: Canopus, 2004). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
32. See, for example, Alison E. Martin’s recent Special Issue of the *Journal of Literature and Science* 8.1 (2015), “Ingenious Minds: Women as Facilitators of Scientific Knowledge Exchange, 1810-1900”. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
33. For overviews of Graham’s life and career, see the introductions to Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile*, ed. Jennifer Hayward (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), and Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil*, ed. Jennifer Hayward and M. Soledad Caballero (Anderson, SC: Parlor Press). Regina Akel’s *Maria Graham: A Literary Biography* (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2009) assembles some useful information but should be used with caution; its account of Graham is very partial (in both senses) and sometimes inaccurate. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
34. For Graham’s diverse scientific interests, see Betty Hagglund, “The Botanical Writings of Maria Graham”, *Journal of Literature and Science* 4.1 (2011): 44-58; Carl Thompson, “Earthquakes and Petticoats: Maria Graham, Geology, and Early Nineteenth-Century ‘Polite’ Science”, *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17.3 (2012): 1-18; Carl Thompson, “‘Only the Amblyrhynchus’: Maria Graham’s Scientific Editing of *Voyage of HMS Blonde* (1826/7)”, *Journal of Literature and Science* 8.1 (2015): 48-68. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
35. For Graham’s art-historical interests and aesthetic influence, see Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France* (London: Phaidon, 1976) 47-49; Caroline Palmer, “‘I Will Tell Nothing That I Did Not *See*’: British Women’s Travel Writing, Art, and the Science of Connoisseurship, 1776-1860”, *Forum of Modern Language Studies* 51.3 (2015): 248-268 (258-62). [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
36. Graham, *Chile* 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
37. For the frequent use in travel writing of the “modesty topos”, by men as well as women, see Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers, and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) 102-106. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
38. *Monthly Review* 106 (1825): 193. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
39. Kinsley, *Women Writing* 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
40. See Kinsley, *Women Writing* 55-6, 67-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
41. Graham, *Chile* 149. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
42. Graham, *Brazil* 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
43. Hooker commended Graham’s abilities as a plant collector several times in print; see, for example, W.J. Hooker and G.A.W. Arnott, “Contributions Towards a Flora of South America and the Islands of the Pacific”, *Botanical Miscellany* 3 (1833); and Hooker, “Martius on the Botany of Brazil”, *Journal of Botany* 4 (1842). Eastlake wrote privately to Lawrence in 1819 suggesting that Graham be engaged to translate Ticozzi’s 1817 biography of Titian; he noted that “she may easily make a translation more interesting than the original” (Royal Academy Archive LAW/4/49). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
44. The *Monthly*’s article is reproduced in *The Atheneum; Or The Spirit of the English Magazines* 9 (1821); this quotation 376. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
45. *Eclectic Review* 15 (1821): 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
46. *Monthly Review* 106: 180. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
47. For useful introductions to two of these women, see Melissa Bailes, “Hybrid Britons: West Indian Colonial History and Maria Riddell’s Natural History”, *European Romantic Review* 20.2 (2009): 207-217; and on Anne Miller, Palmer 250-55. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
48. Maria Frawley’s *A Wider Range* remains an excellent introduction to Victorian women travellers like Jameson and Martineau. Also useful is Judith Johnston’s *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel, Translation and Culture*; for Costello, see Claire Broome Saunders, *Louisa Stuart Costello: A Nineteenth-Century Writing Life* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-47)