

Title: **Global Routes of Travel Writing**, Spring 2019

Instructor: Aria Fani (Near Eastern Studies, U.C. Berkeley).

Texts:

- Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels [Safarnāma]*. Ed. & trans. W.M. Thackston, Jr. (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2001)
- Ibn, Battuta. *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*. Trans. Tim Mackintosh-Smith (London: Picador, 2003)
- Gertrude Bell, *Safar Nameh: Persian Pictures, A Book of Travel* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1894)
- Halidé Edib, *Inside India* (New Delhi & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Travel writings are valuable for a number of reasons. For me as a scholar of literature and cultural history, they are worthy of critical attention because they document the ways in which all cultures have developed through stubbornly unmappable patterns of contact and exchange with the world within and around them. Travelogues show us that no culture is ever sealed off from humanity and that any effort to neatly classify the world into self-contained civilizational units based on racial characteristics or notions of cultural essentialism is simply misguided and deeply ahistorical.

In this course, we will read four travelogues: 1) Nasir-i Khusraw's account of his seven-year travel in the Mediterranean, Arabia and Levant 2) Ibn Battuta's fourteenth-century text on his travels in Africa, Asia and Europe 3) Gertrude Bell's journey in nineteenth-century Persia 4) and Halidé Edib's thoughts on the process of nation-building in pre-partition India in her twentieth-century travel narrative. We will examine how each text cultivates certain literary techniques and analytic methods of world-making. Also a subject of discussion will be their relevance in our world today, particularly in light of globalization and its local discontents.

Schedule

(tentative like everything else in life)

1. January 27, 2019: Nāṣir-i Khusraw (pp 1-66)

2. February 17: Nāṣir-i Khusraw (pp 66-133)

3. February 24: Ibn Battutah (pp. 1-64)

4. March 31: Ibn Battutah (pp. 65-101) / Gertrude Bell (pp. 3-50)

5. April 7: Gertrude Bell (pp. 51-155)

6. April 17: Halidé Edib (pp. 163-168 - 207-217)