Preface

I am just about old enough for my first trip abroad to have been by ship. In the summer of 1985, we went to the Netherlands: my mum and dad, my American grandma and I, to see my older brother in concert and, as it transpired, to do a bit of family history. These were the days before budget flights belched Brits into Europe's sunny climes, so we drove as far as Harwich and there boarded the ferry to the Hook of Holland. I was eight years old and remember little of the holiday except us visiting the small town whence a certain Mr Doesburg emigrated to New Amsterdam in the mid-1600s. And I remember that on the way home, the ferry's engines broke down mid-crossing. We sat for hours in the English Channel, waiting for the engineers to ship in from Rotterdam while watching the world on the horizon. Whatever my parents said about the situation – and I fancy they said plenty – I thought it was *brilliant*.

One hundred years earlier and on the other side of the globe, a slightly older boy experienced a similar thrill. Having left his childhood home in rural Hyogo prefecture, he arrived at the bustling port of Kobe, where he boarded a steamer bound for a new life in Tokyo. He would remember the quayside moment, in August 1887, as he wrote his autobiography in the late-1950s:

> I think it was from around where the American Pier now is. Lighters were setting off from the wharves, and in the distance a ship was approaching. It was the 2,300-ton *Yamashiro-maru*, which subsequently served in the Sino-Japanese war. With a mixture of excitement and pride – 'it's a 2,000-plus-ton ship!' – I went onboard. But even then, I just couldn't sleep. Perhaps it was the vessel's smell, the rarity of everything. So despite it being forbidden, I sneaked in to look at the Westerners in the first class saloon. Everything was a complete surprise. This was the first time I saw the world.

Domestic migration was no rare thing in nineteenth-century Japan, be it for off-season labour away from the farm or for the pursuit of wealth and independence in the great metropolis of Edo (renamed Tokyo

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during the Meiji revolution of 1868).[1] In this sense, the boy in question – who, as Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), would go on to become one of the founding scholars of Japanese folklore studies – was part of a longer phenomenon which stretched back centuries, and which would continue into the decades of Japan's post-Second World War recovery and high-economic growth.[2] But the 1880s were also marked by a new phenomenon: overseas migration in large numbers by non-elite Japanese. Beginning with the 29,000 mainly rural labourers who crossed the Pacific on the Japan–Hawai'i government-sponsored emigration programme (1885–94), and continuing through the years of Japanese colonial expansion, the overseas diaspora exceeded 2.5 million at the zenith of the empire in 1940. Major communities of the emperor's subjects were to be found in Brazil, Hawai'i, the United States, the Philippines, Peru and Canada, as also in the colonial settlements of Manchuria, China, Korea, Taiwan, Micronesia and southern Sakhalin.[3] The ship which Yanagita boarded in 1887, the *Yamashiro-maru*, was synonymous with Japanese overseas migration in this early period, from ferrying 12,000 labourers to Hawai'i during the government-sponsored programme, to opening a new commercial line between Japan and Australia after the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5).

This book follows the *Yamashiro-maru*'s journeys to reconstruct what Yanagita called 'the world' of this three-decked iron steamer, 92 metres long and over 11 metres wide (301 feet by 37½ feet): the world of the *Yamashiro-maru*, and the worlds it both navigated and helped create.[4] Through the ship, I address such topics as the centrality of overseas migration to Japanese state-building, the relationship between migrant labour and settler colonialism in Hawai'i and Australia, and the

[1] See, for example, Amy Stanley, *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Woman's Life in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2020).

[2] Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男, *Kokyō shichijū nen* 故郷七十年 (*Seventy Years of Home*) (Kobe: Kobe Shinbun Sōgō Shuppan Sentā, 2010 [1957]), p. 15. Yanagita's surname by birth, and at the time he left Kobe, was Matsuoka. For his importance to the field of folklore studies, see Alan S. Christy, *A Discipline on Foot: Inventing Japanese Native Ethnography, 1910–1945* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

[3] Kenneth J. Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 148. This number refers to Japanese from the main islands and Okinawa, but not to colonial Japanese subjects who emigrated from, say, Korea to Manchuria.

[4] In this book, I follow recent convention in not gendering ships as female: see 'And all who sail in…it? The language row over "female" ships', *Guardian*, 26 April 2019 (www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/26/ships-she-royal-navy-language-row-female) (last accessed 29 March 2021). The suffix '*-maru*' is given to all non-military ships in Japan.

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significance of Japanese coal to the geopolitics of the northern Pacific and Northeast Asia.

Primarily, however, *Mooring the Global Archive* intervenes in debates about the methodologies and epistemologies of historical research. Yanagita wrote of *seeing* the world. My first contention is that those of us interested in writing global histories need to pay more attention to the eye through which historians see the world, namely the archive. To write a global history assumes at some level the existence of a global archive. But unlike local archives for local histories or national archives for national histories, this 'global' archive boasts no obvious physical location, no given site from which to start. Where purportedly global archives might be found, and how they must be imaginatively constructed, are questions which animate this book – and the answers to these questions affect also my mode of writing.

Indeed, my second contention is that, in locating and articulating this 'global archive', historians need to reflect more openly than our training has generally allowed on questions of practical positionality, or what I will term *authorial metadata*. Here my departure point is an oft-overlooked observation by Marc Bloch. In *The Historian's Craft*, he notes that in historical works of a 'serious nature', the author offers the reader a list of archival files and printed source collections – as if such a list would speak to the realities of transmitting historical knowledge. That is all very well, Bloch writes, but not enough:

> Every historical book worthy of the name ought to include a chapter, or if one prefers, a series of paragraphs inserted at turning points in the development, which might almost be entitled: 'How can I know what I am about to say?' I am persuaded that even the lay reader would experience an actual intellectual pleasure in examining these 'confessions'. The sight of an investigation, with its successes and reverses, is seldom boring.[5]

Mooring the Global Archive is an experiment in fleshing out a response to Bloch's entreaty.[6] It is my attempt to investigate not just how institutions of knowledge have shaped scholars' understandings of the past, but also how contingency influences our own institutional interactions – and how those interactions depend on who 'we' are. In offering sights of

[5] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015 [1949]), p. 59.

[6] Here I heed the call for 'historians to publicly experiment with ways of presenting their methodologies, procedures, and experiences with historical data as they engage in a cyclical process of contextualization and interpretation': Fred Gibbs and Trevor Owens, 'The Hermeneutics of Data and Historical Writing', in Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki, eds., *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), pp. 159–70, here p. 160.

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a Japanese ship and its migrant histories, I shall cite documents from multiple archives; but I also attempt to site those archives, materially to moor them in particular geographical and political contexts.[7] This will at times involve both questioning the extent to which 'actual archives' are comprised of written documents,[8] and also challenging the assumption that the exponential digitization of sources has had the effect of 'unmooring our previously emplaced archive'.[9] Throughout, I examine the tensions between 'the global' and 'the archive' as I encountered them in my investigations. In this sense, *Mooring the Global Archive* is a personal confession of historical practices in the first decades of the twenty-first century. I can only speak for my own circumstances in what follows, but I hope that the various archival traps I fell into and clambered out of resonate with other scholars, too. Though I agree with Bloch's sentiment, I shall avoid a language of 'successes and reverses' per se, partly because the so-called reverse is often the moment of most surprising insight. You can be sailing along, then something happens to disrupt the journey – and suddenly there is the improbable excitement of being all at sea.

[7] On 'sites of citation', see Kris Manjapra, 'Transnational Approaches to Global History: A View from the Study of German–Indian Entanglement', *German History* 32, 2 (2014): 274–93, here p. 288, in turn inspired by the methodology of Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[8] The phrase is repeated in Markus Friedrich, *The Birth of the Archive: A History of Knowledge*, trans. John Noël Dillon (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018 [2013]), pp. 11–12.

[9] Michael Goebel, 'Ghostly Helpmate: Digitization and Global History', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 47 (2021): 35–57, here p. 39.

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