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George Bowen and his 1854 Murray *Handbook for Travellers in Greece*

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ABSTRACT: George Bowen's Handbook for Travellers in Greece, published by John Murray in 1854, was the world's first practical guide to Greece. It preserves Victorian travel experiences at a time when guidebooks were beginning to denote the scale of British influence, and opens up an overlooked area of British imperialism. This paper contextualises and scrutinises Bowen's Handbook, highlighting its significance in bridging the bifurcation between picturesque travelogues and supposedly impartial guides; in addressing tensions between systematisation and liberation; and in challenging anti-Greek prejudice. It explores Bowen's mixed identity as defender of Greek liberty and emissary of a burgeoning colonial power, and asks if a critical examination of his writings and life can provide an enriching route into the past.

KEYWORDS: Nineteenth Century Greece; Victorian Travel; George Bowen; John Murray; Handbook; Imperialism; Development of Tourism; Travel Writing

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'THE STRUGGLES OF Modern Greece must command the sympathy of all thoughtful minds.'[1] So wrote British traveller, scholar and colonial administrator George Bowen in his *Handbook for Travellers in Greece,* published by John Murray in 1854. Bowen was troubled by Greece's struggles to cast off Ottoman imperialism and take shape as the first new independent state in post-Napoleonic Europe. In the mid-nineteenth century, his *Handbook* was one of the most respected authorities on Greece. Now long forgotten, its value lies in its preservation of travel experiences at a period when the burgeoning guidebook genre was beginning to denote the scale of British influence on the development of tourism and travel writing; on travellers' experience and understanding of abroad; and on the destinations themselves.

[1] *A Handbook for Travellers in Greece* (London: John Murray, 1854), p. 1. Henceforth referred to as the *Handbook.*

Using Bowen's unpublished journals, and correspondence in the John Murray Archive, this paper contextualises and scrutinises Bowen's *Handbook*, highlighting its significance in bridging the bifurcation between picturesque subjective travelogues, and reliable objective guides.[2] Whereas travel writing is a literature of personal reminiscences and impressions, guidebooks provide advice and information for others. This is a distinction dubbed by Eleanor McNees the 'Battle of the travel books', which crystalised in the mid-Victorian era as travel writing flourished and guidebooks emerged in their present form.[3] McNees shows that Dickens' *Pictures from Italy* was more influenced by Murray's 1842 and 1843 handbooks to Italy than he admitted; I argue that Bowen's *Handbook* was more personal and subjective than appeared. It functions as a core sample of a particular place at a particular time, but crucially of particular views of that place and time. Today, Bowen's classical quotations without translation, abundant allusions to Byron, and lordly impressions of an objectified Other seem anachronistic and elitist.[4] Referring to travel writing as an act of translation, travel theorist Caren Kaplan asks: 'Are imperialist travellers' descriptions of cultural differences the ones we want to reproduce in tourist brochures?'[5] I ask instead if a critical reading of Bowen's *Handbook* can open up an important but overlooked area of Victorian authorship, and help bring a tangled imperial past into focus.

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[2] Most of Bowen's journals are unpublished, except for a section in 1849 published as *Mount Athos, Thessaly, and Epirus: A diary of a Journey from Constantinople to Corfu* (London: Rivington, 1852).

[3] Eleanor McNees, 'Reluctant Source: Murray's Handbooks and Pictures from Italy', *Dickens Quarterly*, 4 (2007), 211-20 (p. 211). McNees argues that the new guidebook genre freed travel writers from having to combine their personal reactions with prosaic history and practical advice. Previously, Romantic travelogues such as Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (London: John Murray, 1812) included footnotes that advised travellers on how to visit places referenced in the main text.

[4] For a summary of recently-debated formal issues such as the nature and function of the stereotype, the subjective presence of the author, truth value in narrative writing, inter-cultural 'translation', exoticism, and the role of dominance in the relationship between travel writers and those they represent, see Mary Baine Campbell, 'Travel Writing and its theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing,* ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 261-278.

[5] Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1996), p. x.

John Murray's iconic handbooks were the world's first guidebook series. They reflected and facilitated increasingly complex communication systems, and expanded tourism and travel guide publishing, thereby helping to extend the informal and ever-shifting global web of disparate but interdependent spheres of influence and aims that John Darwin calls, 'the British world-system'.[6] According to Keighren, Withers and Bell, from about 1813 the publisher 'was at the centre of London's official and colonial networks.'[7] Between the start of the handbook series in 1836 and its sale to Edward Stanford in 1901, Murray published handbooks to almost every European country as well as Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Palestine, Algeria and Tunis, the Mediterranean, India, Japan, and New Zealand.[8] Murray handbooks were the 'supreme monument to the era between the stage coach and the aeroplane: the age of steam locomotion by land and sea.'[9] In 1853, travel writer George Hillard noted: 'Murray's Guidebooks now cover nearly the whole of the Continent and constitute one of the great powers of Europe. Since Napoleon no man's empire has been so wide.'[10] The gold lettering on red cloth was as recognisable as a British passport: 'The handbooks were manuals of optimism for the happiest humans of that age: the English gentleman.'[11]

The handbooks were part of an explosion of travel writing that coincided with Europe's accelerating steam-powered communications, and excitement about

[6] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 23.

[7] Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859,* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 54. This focuses on non-European narratives of exploration rather than guides.

[8] The sale excluded India and Japan.

[9] John Gretton, 'Introduction', in William Lister, *A Bibliography of Murray's Handbooks for Travellers* (Norfolk: Dereham Books, 1993), p. xxv.

[10] George Hillard, *Six Months in Italy* (London: John Murray, 1853), p. 353.

[11] Edward Mendelson, 'Baedeker's Universe', *Yale Review*, 74 (1985), 386-403. In this review, Mendelson claims that in 1846 Baedeker bettered Murray by introducing the bright red cloth 'that was later imitated by most other guidebook publishers, eventually by Murray himself.' In fact, Murray was there first: all the Murray handbooks were red (except the first edition of Switzerland which was blue) but the vegetable dyes, later replaced by chemical, faded to tan, hence Mendelson's mistake.; Antoni Mączak, 'Gentlemen's Europe: Nineteenth-Century "Handbooks for Travellers"', *Annali D'Italianistica*, 21 (2003), 347–362 (p. 362).

geographical and intellectual expansion, which included an urge to map and calibrate the world. The Ordnance Survey's activities in mapping the British Isles since 1791 were well-known to the British public, being broadcast 'in enthusiastic detail' in the press.[12] John Murray III's publisher father, John Murray II (1778-1843), was central to this expansionist phenomenon. A founding Fellow of The Royal Geographical Society in 1830, he published a mainly non-fiction list of history, philosophy, science, medical books and travel including, in 1839, Charles Darwin's epic *Voyage of the Beagle*: one of numerous books to stoke interest in science and exploration. His list read 'like a who's who of nineteenth-century travel writing.'[13]

The lack of a useful guidebook inspired the first handbook. As a young man in 1829, John Murray III made his first visit to the Continent, but since little practical information was available for travellers to Northern Europe, he found himself at a loss in Hamburg without such 'friendly aid'. He collected 'all the facts, information, statistics, &c., which an English tourist would be likely to require', and enriched them with information on history, architecture, geology 'and other subjects suited to a traveller's need'.[14] It was published in 1836 as *A Handbook for Travellers on the Continent,* and according to Barbara Schaff marked the invention of the modern guidebook.[15] That downplays the influence of the tone, structure and intended audience of *Travels on the Continent* by the redoubtable Mariana Starke, published by John Murray II in numerous editions from 1820. But while Starke offered information and practical advice, her account was essentially a personal travelogue. Murray III pared back the personal. He also added uniformity, attention to detail and accuracy, and, for the first time, systematically synthesised literature with practical verified facts and advice.[16] Hugely

[12] Rachel Hewitt, *Map of a Nation* (London: Granta, 2011), p. 203.

[13] Bill Bell, 'Authors in an Industrial Economy: the case of John Murray's travel writers', *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture 1780-1840*, 21 (2013), 9-29 (p. 9).

[14] John Murray IV, *John Murray III 1808-1892: A Brief Memoir* (London: John Murray, 1919), pp. 40-41.

[15] Barbara Schaff, 'John Murray's Handbooks to Italy: Making Tourism Literary', in *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture*, ed. by Nicola J Watson (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2009), p. 106.

[16] For the relationship between Starke and Murray see Kirsten Banks, *The John Murray Archive, 1820s-1840s: (Re)establishing the House Identity* (Doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2013), pp. 203-216.

successful, it was swiftly followed by *Southern Germany* (1837), *Switzerland* (1838) and *France* (1843).

Murray's timing was brilliant. By the 1840s most major destinations were accessible, but most guidebooks were a 'heterogenous collection of hints to young men on the Grand Tour', while the formerly popular road books were being superseded by the burgeoning railways.[17] The appetite for guidebooks was growing, and, with their handbooks, generations of enterprising Murrays satisfied it. Karl Baedeker of Leipzig was John Murray III's greatest rival, but every place they both covered was described by Murray first.[18] Baedeker did not produce his first *Guide to Greece* until 1889, thirty-five years after Murray published Bowen's *Handbook.* The first Greece guide in Hachette's Guide-Joanne series, precursors of the French Guides Bleus, did not appear until 1891, by which time Murray had published four successive updated editions.
Murray's handbook series took off with enthusiastic reviews, large sales, and eminent authors offering their services, including Ruskin on Cumbria and Trollope on Ireland, both of whom were turned down. The *Saturday Review* noted the emergence of Baedeker as a 'capital guide', but 'by no means so pleasant an instructor as his English rival'.[19] Hillard eulogised:

> I very rarely found occasion to correct a statement, or to dissent from an opinion. They are compiled with so much taste, learning, and judgement, and have so many well-chosen quotations in prose and verse, that they are not merely useful guides but entertaining companions.[20]

In 1850 Bowen, an Oxford Classicist and Vice-Chancellor of the Ionian University in Corfu, proposed himself as author of the first *Handbook for Travellers in Greece*.

Banks argues that Starke helped Murray make the distinction between 'authentic' traveller and 'commoditised' tourist.

[17] Gretton, p. ii.

[18] 'The Origin and History of Murray's Handbooks for Travellers', *Murray's Magazine*, 6 November 1889, pp. 623-29.

[19] 'German Literature', *Saturday Review*, 15 August 1857, p. 157.

[20] Hillard, p. 353.

Since the mid-seventeenth century, ancient Greece, as opposed to Rome, had been increasingly revered as the bedrock of European civilisation, and during the eighteenth century had become regarded as 'a polestar of nearly blinding brilliance.'[21] The 'Franks' – western non-Greeks – venerated Greece's ancient culture and claimed it as their own by appropriating it into their cultural baggage and (to Bowen's disgust) physically carting it off: by 1807 the so-called Elgin Marbles were on display in London. However, Greece was considered too uncivilised and dangerous to form part of the Grand Tour. The Hellenic ideal was more appealing than the reality. Byron's travelling companion John Hobhouse noted, 'only a few desperate scholars and artists ventured to trust themselves among the barbarians, to contemplate the ruins of Greece.'[22] Winckelmann, who with Goethe arguably did more than anyone to disseminate knowledge of Greek culture throughout Europe, never visited Greece.[23] Nor did Shelley, whose lyric drama *Hellas* (1822) celebrated Europe's debt to Greek civilisation and radicalism. Nonetheless, while the Napoleonic Wars disrupted the Grand Tour, some, like Byron and Hobhouse who still travelled but were prevented from visiting France or Italy, visited Greece instead. In 1809 Hobhouse found Athens swarming with travellers.[24] This was interrupted by the 1820s revolution, but when Bowen arrived in 1847 communications, security and medical conditions were improving, and hotels opening. He felt a Greek handbook was required.[25]

Bowen argued that Murray's current handbook for the East (1845), which covered Greece along with the Ionian Islands, Turkey, Constantinople, Asia Minor and

[21] David Constantine, *In the Footsteps of the Gods: Travellers to Greece and the quest for the Hellenic Ideal* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), p. 104. This work was first published as *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[22] John Cam Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia*, 2 vols (London: James Cawthorn, 1813), I, pp. 301-2. For further discussion of the Greek Grand Tour up to the 1820s, including modes of preparation for the journey and guidebooks, see Helen Angelomatis-Tsougarakis, *The Eve of the Greek Revival: British Travellers' Perceptions of Early Nineteenth-Century Greece* (London: Routledge, 1990).

[23] Constantine, pp. 116-127. Constantine speculates that fear of physically confronting the destruction of the Hellenic ideal kept Winckelmann and Goethe away.

[24] Hobhouse, I, p. 203.

[25] Bowen, p. v.

Malta, was 'a skilfully prepared abstract of the works of the most celebrated travellers,' but because of recent changes in Greece was out of date.[26] William Lister shows that it was based on a text by Godfrey Levigne, an Anglo-Irish traveller in the Levant between 1830-33, with the rest written by Henry Headley Parish, a diplomat in Constantinople and Secretary to the British Legation in Athens from 1830-1834. Published by Murray in 1840, it was updated in 1845 by Octavian Blewitt, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.[27] Privately dismissing it in his journal as 'very poor for the East', Bowen assured Murray that he did not wish to criticise 'so useful a compendium', but to repeat what many travellers had requested: that there should be a stand-alone handbook for Greece. He suggested splitting the handbook for the East into two, one covering the Ottoman Empire in Europe and Asia, including Syria, and the other to cover the countries inhabited by the Hellenic race. He offered to write the latter.[28]

Seventeenth in the series, Bowen's *Handbook* was the world's first accurate practical guidebook devoted solely to Greece. Bowen acknowledged that numerous other writers had described Greece, but this was the first time their works had been 'compared, extracted and compressed into portable shape'.[29] While Blewitt's 1845 handbook for the East devoted 228 pages to the 'Hellenic' regions, Bowen's *Handbook* at 460 pages was double the length and far more detailed. He retained c.100 pages of Blewitt, Parish and Levigne's original texts, repeating matter-of-fact advice about practicalities such as passports and health conditions, and descriptions of places he could not visit himself, but added comprehensive introductory essays and painstakingly-researched new routes.

Murray's uniform template gave readers confidence that they knew where to find information no matter what country they were in. Contents were equally systematic. Murray strove to create a rational discourse based not on reminiscences or impressions,

[26] Ibid. Bowen was referring to *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople* (London: John Murray, 1845), henceforth cited as the handbook for the East

[27] William Lister, *A Bibliography of Murray's Handbooks for Travellers* (Norfolk: Dereham Books, 1993).

[28] National Library of Scotland, John Murray Archive, MS.40136, 20 November 1850. This correspondence will henceforth be cited as GFB to JM with the date.

[29] Bowen, p. v.

but on scientific observation. Travellers were encouraged to send updated information for inclusion in future editions, but Murray welcomed personal observations only, and demanded from his authors succinct 'matter-of-fact descriptions of what ought to be seen at each place,' avoiding 'florid descriptions and exaggerated superlatives.'[30] Although his handbook authors included an illustrious roster of diplomats, soldiers, clergy and academics, they were known as editors and signified at most by their initials. These were not their guides but the publisher's, their authority underwritten by the renowned Murray institution. Murray himself was not identified as the first handbook editor until 1887, fifty years after publication.[31]

Personal knowledge was welcome; personal opinions were not. Murray complained that Parish's manuscript of the 1840 handbook for the East had 'allusions to Politics, and the Eastern Question […] that every impartial person must allow to be quite irrelevant in a Guidebook.'[32] Murray was concerned that Parish's anti-Russian remarks would exclude the book from sale in Russian-ruled countries, and could even be confiscated and see the owner locked up. Richard Ford, whose flamboyant and witty *Handbook for Travellers in Spain* became the most highly regarded in the series, was furious when Murray, concerned about alienating international buyers, forced him to cut criticisms of the French, the church, and the Spanish aristocracy.[33] Ford moaned that Murray wanted him to be 'mechanical and matter-of-fact […] and I am an ass for my pains. I have been throwing pearly articles into the trough of a road-book.'[34] Ford withdrew the first edition and had to repay his five-hundred-pound fee. Murray eventually published the rewritten book in 1845.[35] Augustus Hare, who wrote two handbooks to English counties in the 1860s, complained that his writing for Murray had to be 'as hard, dry and incisive' as his taskmaster. 'No sentiment, no expression of

[30] John Murray III, *A Handbook for Travellers on the Continent*, (London: John Murray 1836), p. v.

[31] Murray IV, pp. 40-41.

[32] JM III to Parish, 22 December 1839, John Murray Archive, MS.41911.

[33] *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain*, 2 vols, (London: John Murray, 1845)

[34] Ford to Henry Addington, 18 November 1841, quoted in E. W. Gilbert, 'Richard Ford and His "Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain"', *The Geographical Journal*, 3/4 (1945), 144-151 (pp. 178-9).

[35] Reviewers deplored Ford's Francophobia, but *Spain* was a huge success, selling 1389 copies in three months. Gretton, p. x.

opinion were ever to be allowed, all description was to be reduced to its barest bones, dusty, dead and colourless […] utterly unreadable.'[36] Hare was so frustrated he left to write rival guidebooks of his own.

Bowen's *Handbook* was commissioned in 1851, the 'watershed year' of the Great Exhibition, when free trade globalisation was taking hold in British politics and culture.[37] The Victorian era may have been bound by systems, but it was also a liberating time of mental, physical and commercial expansion and adventure. This sets up intriguing tensions between constraint and freedom, which Bowen's *Handbook* addresses. In his history of lines, anthropologist Tim Ingold distinguishes between 'lines of transport' and 'wayfaring lines', the former rigid, repetitive, unimaginative and constraining, the latter meandering dynamic pathways of movement and growth.[38] Bowen's journal shows him wayfaring around Greece, with no clear aim other than to engage with 'the country that opens up along his path.'[39] By contrast, the *Handbook*'s specified routes are lines of transport to prescribed destinations and objects of attention, and transform place into a series of nodes 'in a static network of connectors.'[40]

But how far did Murray's editorial strictures constrain Bowen's individuality? Superficially, Bowen conformed to Murray's protocols. He promised Murray a 'brief but systematic account' that 'adhered strictly to the arrangement and table of contents', and systematised the material 'scattered very often in a very incorrect shape, up and down the old Handbook for the East.'[41] His ambition was not to explore his feelings, or situate himself in relation to the sublime or picturesque, but to give the public 'more correct and accurate information than is to be found in the books – however clever and interesting – of previous travellers.'[42] Measured impersonality was an aesthetic

[36] *The Story of My Life* (London: George Allen, 1896), quoted in Gretton, p. xvii.

[37] Paul Young, *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 193.

[38] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 84.

[39] Ibid., p. 76.

[40] Ibid., p. 75.

[41] GFB to JM III, 28 February 1853.

[42] Bowen, p. 135.

imperative and an ethical ideal. Following an excursion from Athens on 2nd October 1847, Bowen recorded in his journal:

> Hence this road ascends - & winding through a number of undulating hills - covered with a natural shrubbery of fragrant pines & myrtles - we about 11 descended on the plain of Marathon, through a most beautiful gorge wh opens at every turn of the ragged path enchanting views of the sea, & opposite mountains of Euboea.[43]

Cauterising his naturally discursive style, in the *Handbook* this becomes: 'It is possible to go to Marathon and return to Athens in one day, by taking a carriage out to Cephisia, whither horses can be sent on. This is by far the best plan.'[44]

Bowen understood Murray's aim was to acquaint readers with the country, not the editor. In the *Handbook* he quotes 'Demotes', who ridiculed writers on Greece – mostly German princes or noble English marquesses – 'whose books are like Chinese maps, the writer himself representing the Celestial Empire, and the subject some small islands which fill up the rest of the world.'[45] Demotes concluded: 'These noble authors are unlikely to give any very accurate ideas to their respective countrymen.'[46] 'Demotes' mocked both their sense of entitlement and the way they placed themselves at the centre, their egos pushing Greece into the periphery and obscuring it for everyone else.

Churnjeet Mahn, one of few scholars to have examined Greek handbooks, argues that Bowen's contribution to Greek guidebooks was not new or distinctive, and depended on his role as 'a respected colonialist whose knowledge as a representative of the British government had lent an authority to the guidebook that was underwritten by his administrative role for the British Empire.'[47] In fact, although Bowen's *Handbook*

[43] Bowen, unpublished journal, 2 October 1847.

[44] Ibid., p. 209.

[45] *Morning Chronicle,* 10 October 1843, p. 3.

[46] Bowen, p. 43.

[47] Churnjeet Mahn, 'Journeys in the Palimpsest: British Women's Travel to Greece, 1840-1914' (Doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2007), p. 24. Published as *British Women's Travel to Greece, 1840-1914: Travels in the Palimpsest* (London: Ashgate, 2012).

was commissioned while he was the Ionian University's vice-chancellor, it was written after he had resigned that post for an Oxford Fellowship. Additionally, his name lent the *Handbook* no authority because he was not identified as editor until an advertisement appeared in the 1859 *Quarterly Review,* five years after publication, when he was appointed Governor of Queensland. That promotion might have enhanced his authority and increased sales, but the *Handbook* remained anonymous. While Murray's inner circle at the famous Albemarle Street drawing room 'was predicated on class distinctions and members' connections to the fields of literature and politics,' Bowen's authority derived more from his empirical and scholarly research.[48] As he assured Murray:

> I have visited and examined every single site of importance in those countries. In fact, I believe that my travels in these parts have been more extensive than those of any other foreigner – except Colonel Leake. Moreover, I enjoy a great advantage in being personally acquainted with nearly all the natives of distinction both in Greece and in the Ionian Islands; and in being able to speak and write fluently Modern Greek – the only language understood by the vast majority of the population.[49]

His university role gave him access to academics and a library which helped to make him 'thoroughly acquainted with the history – the topography – the language – and the political and moral condition of Modern Greece.'[50]

A closer look shows Murray's schema fracturing under the weight of Bowen's individuality. Although Murray's handbooks were renowned for their research – the word 'Murray' was even used to signify encyclopaedic travel knowledge – Bowen told John Murray III that he intended to combine 'the information of a scholar with the observations of a man of the world'.[51] Both, he said, had written largely on Greece, but

[48] Banks, p. 218.

[49] GFB to JM III, 20 November 1850.

[50] Ibid.

[51] 'Continental notes in July and August', *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct 1859, p. 415; GFB to JM III, 14 March 1851.

with a few honourable exceptions, 'the scholars have not been men of the world, and the men of the world have not been scholars.'[52] He implied that he was both, making his contribution both new and distinctive.

Bowen also managed to express his personal predilections. He hated, for example, the prevailing anti-Greek prejudice. The overriding sentiment of the classically educated was nostalgia for antiquity and disenchantment with the 'primitive' present. Despite never visiting Athens, Edward Gibbon described the Athenians walking 'with supine indifference among the glorious ruins of antiquity; and such is the debasement of their character, that they are incapable of admiring the genius of their predecessors.'[53] The 1845 handbook for the East similarly condemned the Greek 'national character' as the lowest in Europe, claiming that 'vanity is the predominant characteristic and their want of veracity *(Grecia mendax)* is proverbial. They display an uncontrolled propensity to litigation, revenge, and political intrigue, cloaked under the thin veil of patriotic enthusiasm.'[54] Bowen deleted this xenophobia in his edition, arguing that the Greeks had been 'much misrepresented, partly though ignorance and partly through prejudice.'[55] Bowen's edition has an unquestionably lordly tone, its assumed superiority reinforced by his perception of the primitive Greek way of life, corruption, oppression of women, and absence of modern infrastructure, but he nevertheless rejected the widespread narrative of degeneration. He accused classical travellers of being

> Too ready to look down with cold disdain on the forlorn estate of a people, for whose ancestors they profess even an extravagant veneration; – foreigners resident among them have been too eager to accuse of every meanness and

[52] GFB to JM III, 14 March 1851.

[53] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols, (London: Strahan & Cadell, 1782, revised 1845), VI, p. 145. Gibbon took his account from (among others) Jacob Spon's *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grece et du Levant,* 3 vols, (Lyons, 1678), II, pp. 79-199, and George Wheler's *A Journey into Greece* (London, 1682), pp. 337-414.

[54] *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople* (1845), pp. 3-4.

[55] Bowen, p. 44.

> every vice the sons of those fathers who taught Honour and Virtue to the ancient world.[56]

Bowen also, unusually, shifted the focus away from ancient Greece onto modern history, which was 'less familiar to the general reader' but 'indispensable to a right understanding of the present condition of the country and people.'[57]

Bowen was equally unconventional, for a Frank, in seeking to understand the Orthodox Church. Most Europeans overlooked Byzantine culture to focus on the Hellenic ideal and Protestants dismissed Orthodoxy as 'a strange mixture of feasts and fasts; of ringing of bells and muttering jargon.'[58] They abhorred relic-veneration. The 1840 and 1845 Handbooks for the East described the remains of Corfu's patron saint, St Spyridon, as 'mummy-like' and 'a most disgusting object', and Corfu's annual festival, when the saint was processed through the town, an 'absurd affectation of compliance with the prejudices of the people [...] adopted with a view to conciliate the affections of the natives.'[59] As son, grandson and brother of Anglican vicars, Bowen might be expected to have shared the disgust. Instead, he deleted it and wrote respectfully that St Spyridon's embalmed body, thought to have wrought miracles, was preserved in a richly ornamented case, and three times a year was carried 'in solemn procession' around the esplanade, followed by the Greek clergy and native authorities.[60] The 1845 handbook for the East condemned the Greek clergy as coming 'principally from the lowest class, and with few exceptions are ignorant, superstitious and fanatic.'[61] Bowen replaced this with a scholarly chapter on the church, based on his audiences with Patriarchs in Constantinople in 1847 and 1849, and lengthy sojourn on Mount Athos, which few other Europeans had achieved. He assured Murray that his 'minute account'

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., p. 27.

[58] Frances Maclellan, *Sketches of Corfu* (London: Smith, Elder, 1835), p. 119.

[59] *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople*, (London: John Murray, 1840), p. 5.

[60] Bowen, p. 65.

[61] *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople*, (1845), p. 4.

was 'rather more accurate' than Robert Curzon's, the only other detailed contemporary commentary, however 'clever and amusing'.[62]

Forty years later, Bowen was still batting for the Greeks. In 1891 he accused Amy Yule, editor of the 1884 edition, of 'faults of scholarship', and complained that she had cut out 'nearly all that was in favour of the Christians in the Levant', inserting many 'unformulated remarks and petty sneers to their prejudice.'[63] Bowen fulminated:

> This is an error which has been carefully avoided in the other Handbooks. It is obviously bad taste in a work of this nature, which should be, for many reasons, almost colourless with respect to local politics, to attack violently, and often falsely, the character and conduct of the people of the country described, and who naturally resent such treatment and do all they can to disparage the authority of the assailant.[64]

It was bad taste and bad business. Bowen had revisited Greece the previous year (1890) where he was 'personally acquainted with the leading Greeks of all parties' who had found this edition so offensive to themselves and their country that they were 'shunning' it.[65] He marked passages to cut or revise. 'I am in want of an occupation just now, and it would be a labour of love on my part to make the *Handbook for Greece* as good as possible.'[66]

Notwithstanding Bowen's professed resistance to politics and personal opinion, he had a predilection for foreign politics that permeated his *Handbook* despite himself. On page one he referred to the 'present state and future destinies of the Levant' as 'that most important question.'[67] His *Handbook*'s very scope was political. The text

[62] GFB to JM III, 20 November 1850. Curzon's manuscript-buying journey, published by John Murray in 1849 as *A Visit to Monasteries in the Levant*, recounts experiences and observations similar to Bowen's, but Bowen did not share Curzon's collecting instinct or money. In the *Handbook*, Bowen described Mount Athos's ecclesiastical libraries as 'ransacked' by Curzon in 1837, p. 421.

[63] GFB to JM IV, 19 May 1891.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Bowen, p. 1.

includes the northerly swathe of Macedonia, Thessaly, Thrace and parts of Albania, plus many Aegean islands, which comprise Greece today but were then still Ottoman, which Bowen considered 'Classical and Historical Greece […] not yet reunited to Christendom.'[68] The word 'yet' is important here. This was the *Megali Idea*, the Great Idea that preoccupied Greek foreign policy for the next seventy years, of reuniting all Hellenes within future borders in Asia Minor, along the Balkans and the Ionian Sea, with the capital in Constantinople. Bowen included these regions in his *Handbook* because the majority there were Greek in 'those great elements of nationality: blood, religion and language.'[69] By pointing at nationalist fault lines, Bowen provocatively laid down markers for on-going independence movements.

Bowen's gaze was complicated, however, by Greece's geopolitical division between the newly independent Kingdom and Ottoman and British Empires, and by Britain's mixed identity as defender of Greek liberty and burgeoning imperial power. Bowen was relationally positioned between them: this was his defining dialectic. Although Britain administered and 'protected' the Ionian Islands and wielded indirect power in Greece and Turkey, Greece was neither settler colony nor site of conquest, enslavement or conversion. Instead, Bowen articulated Greece's double identity as a subject of Oriental degeneration and a cradle of Western civilisation. Greece was both despised and revered, East and West, 'them' and 'us', peripheral and central, inferior and superior.

Further tension emerges between Bowen as colonial representative, imposing imperial 'lines of transport' on the Ionians, and his wayfaring private views. He was emblematic of the establishment but also resistant to it. The *Handbook* was written just after the 1850 Don Pacifico affair, when Palmerston as Foreign Secretary blockaded Greek ports because the Greek government refused to compensate a British subject when his Athens house was ransacked. During a famous five-hour speech, Palmerston justified his gunboat diplomacy by assuring every British subject that throughout the world he 'shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will

[68] Ibid., p. v.

[69] Ibid.

protect him from injustice and wrong.'[70] As an agent of empire, Bowen represented this triumphalist Victorian outlook, yet he was independent-minded enough to be ambivalent and even opposed to some of its manifestations. In the *Handbook* he noted that Palmerston's policy 'was violently assailed in England,' but that 'debates on the question in both Houses of Parliament will amply repay perusal.'[71] In his private journal he dismissed Palmerston's bellicosity as outrageous.

Bowen was particularly conflicted because while he supported Greek national self-identity, the *Megali Idea* threatened his patriotic sensibilities, and his job. In the *Handbook* he served the imperialist elements of his career by construing the Ionians as politically naive and dependent on Britain to teach them how to govern themselves. He conceded that the Ionians' 'instinct for nationality' had produced a 'vague desire' for union with Greece once the Kingdom had 'become orderly and civilized', but argued that 'enlightened Ionians' were content to enjoy the many practical benefits of British connection.[72] He portrayed the Ionians as contented beneficiaries of the British civilising mission, which had provided 'thirty years of peace and prosperity' after the systematic 'corruption and tyranny' of Venetian rule.[73] In reality, his journals show he was aware of growing political unrest. His *Handbook* descriptions were even culled from *The Ionian Islands under British Protection,* a pamphlet commissioned by the British government to justify its draconian suppression of a Cephalonian riot.[74]

By quoting this anonymous pamphlet, Bowen demonstrated the impartiality required by Murray. As Keighren, Withers and Bell show, Murray authors used scholarly citation to create an appearance of authenticity, and demonstrate erudition and discrimination, which gave them credibility and garnered readers' trust.[75] However, Bowen's use of citation was a front because he had written the pamphlet himself.[76] As

[70] Kenneth Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830-1902*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 302.

[71] Bowen, p. 101.

[72] Ibid., p. 55.

[73] Ibid., p. 53.

[74] George Bowen, *The Ionian Islands under British Protection* (London: Ridgway, 1851).

[75] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 75.

[76] Bowen, p. 44.

if to put readers off the scent in case they doubted his objectivity, Bowen even anonymously criticised his anonymous pamphlet in the *Quarterly Review* for having 'drawn too favourable a portrait of the population', and recommended a 'sterner but truer portrait in the *Times* of Sept 17 1849.'[77] In the *Handbook*, he also appended his name to quotations, or cited himself, writing 'according to Mr Bowen' and relying on the *Handbook*'s anonymity to let him get away with it. By recycling material, he saved himself time and effort, and drew attention to and underwrote the authority of his other publications, but he was also indirectly expressing his own opinions, hiding in plain sight.

The resulting *Handbook* is neither the 'hard, dry and incisive' writing Hare resented, nor the egotistical writing Murray feared, but a synthesis of the impersonal on-site recordings of eighteenth-century antiquarianism ('lines of transport'), with early nineteenth-century Romantic and aesthetic Hellenism ('wayfaring'). In her history of the Ordnance Survey, Rachel Hewitt demonstrates that while the Enlightenment celebrated cartography as 'the language of reason and political equality,' the Romantics often resented rationality for 'enslaving the human mind'. Furthermore, she argues that the Romantics viewed maps and guides more as stimulants for the poetic imagination, and as assisting 'a deeply felt love for nature and solitary wandering.'[78] Bowen's *Handbook* embodied this duality. It was a rational guide to the archetypal home of political liberty and egalitarianism, which was also a place of sublime landscapes and picturesque ruins that had special resonance for the Romantic sensibility. This dialectic of objectivity and subjectivity, of scientific and personal, gave rise to Bowen's mid-century realism, and put him in a unique position to bridge the gap between travel writing and guiding, and to elevate guidebooks to a new literary level.

[77] 'Ionian Administration', *Quarterly Review*, 91 (1852), 315-352, p. 321. Note that reviewing your own book was not new: Walter Scott, who co-founded the *Quarterly Review* with John Murray in 1809, anonymously reviewed his own *Tales of my Landlord*, and this was his harshest review.

[78] Hewitt, pp. 147, 145, 203.

Bowen's *Handbook* presents other intriguing tensions between freedom and constraint. It opened up Greece to the newly-travelling middle classes, enabling them to set off in Byron's romantic footsteps, including skeleton tours viable for time-pressed professionals on a budget, rather than the months or even years required for the Grand Tour. Given the 'unavoidable discomforts of travelling in Greece', a *valet-de-place* was still recommended, but travellers were liberated from having to employ expensive Grand Tour-style entourages of servants, because the *Handbook*'s practical advice explained how to manage for themselves.[79] The Grand Tour was essentially educative, but travellers no longer needed to hire expert guides because the *Handbook*'s authoritative chapters on Greek art and archaeology, subcontracted by Bowen to an expert antiquarian named Penrose, could inform. The *Times* was even moved to claim that 'by the help of Murray, the veriest Cockney, the greenest schoolboy and the meekest country clergyman may leave his counter, his school or his parsonage, and make his way through all Europe comfortably, cheaply and expeditiously.'[80] This was an illusion, because Bowen's *Handbook* alone cost 15 shillings, equivalent to an agricultural labourer's weekly wage, but the point was that Murray – and Bowen – were creating space in a new publishing market to reach as wide a readership as possible. They were attempting to meet the needs not only of a pre-industrial society in which wealthy travellers could enjoy long periods of leisurely exploration, but also those of the socially and geographically mobile middle classes who followed routes during time-limited holidays, and abhorred, envied, or aspired to that kind of moneyed leisure. It was Byron made bourgeois. This sets up a further tension between social classes via the democratisation of travel to which it contributed, and the constraining elitism it served. This connects with mimetic fantasies of colonial exploration, and tension between wayfaring aspiration and constraining reality. While the travelogue described what the author had done in the past, the guidebook offered a fantasy of what the reader might do in the future. Travellers might have aspired to the adventures the *Handbook* proposed, but few would have shared Bowen's intellectual intentions or physical bravery and followed all his routes. Bowen knew this, and was keen to direct his

[79] Bowen, p. 17.

[80] *Times,* 2 December 1850, cited in Gretton, p. xlviii.

Handbook towards both 'travellers abroad' and 'readers at home', for whom 'a full account has [...] been long a desideration.'[81] But like Bulwer Lytton's popular silver fork novels, the *Handbook* revealed a world about which most people could only dream, giving readers a sense of pressing their faces to the glass.

By accompanying the lure of adventure with instructions on how to achieve it, the *Handbook* may have liberated travellers from human guides, but it curtailed their freedom in other ways. Handbooks never sought to overpower readers with 'the dogma of critical orthodoxy'; although there were attempts to evolve hierarchies of sights, 'the tyranny of good taste and received wisdom' did not dominate.[82] Nevertheless, they sought to engineer travellers' experiences by directing them along scripted pathways – lines of transport – pointing out every view and noting every cultural reference in exceptional detail. The pre-planned routes helped travellers to navigate around the countries they visited, but ironically limited their imaginative possibilities and opportunities for discoveries of their own. The journey became 'no more than an explication of the plot.'[83]

This signposts tensions between independent traveller and guided tourist, with the tourist narrative defining itself against the former, often 'with an acute sense of belatedness.'[84] Many scholars have explored the cultural connotations inherent in distinctions between 'traveller' and 'tourist': the traveller often characterised as a sensitive wayfarer enjoying authentic experiences off the beaten track, unlike the supposedly sheep-like tourist following prescribed lines of transport, shielded and comforted by familiarity.[85] Ingold sees the traveller as hunter-gatherer, continually

[81] GFB to JM III, 20 November 1850. Original emphasis; GFB to JM III, 18 April 1853. Original emphasis.

[82] Jonathan Keates, *The Portable Paradise: Baedeker, Murray and the Victorian Guidebook* (London: Notting Hill Editions, 2011), p. 9.

[83] Ingold, p. 15.

[84] Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 7.

[85] See *The Norton Book of Travel*, ed. by Paul Fussell (New York and London: Norton, 1987); Susan Bassnett, 'Introduction', in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Jennifer Speake (London: Routledge, 2003); and James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the ways to "Culture" 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Buzard explores how a democratising and institutionalising tourism gave rise to new formulations about what constitutes

responding to the environment in an intimate coupling of locomotion and perception: 'He watches, listens and feels as he goes, his entire being alert to the countless cues that, at every moment, prompt the slightest adjustments to his bearing.'[86] For Bowen 'tourist' still meant Grand Tourist, not the denigrated successor. However, he did imply a distinction, identifying his ideal reader – and himself – in the *Handbook*'s first sentence: 'A journey in Greece is full of deep and lasting interest for a traveller of every character, except indeed for a mere idler or man of pleasure.'[87] For educated handbook readers, travel meant self-education and acculturation: work, not pleasure. Murray handbooks were directed at the tourist's corollary, the serious-minded morally superior 'anti-tourist'.[88] They nevertheless standardised and packaged experiences and knowledge into recipes for mass consumption.

What was Bowen's effect and legacy? His reach was wide. Murray's profits were dented by expenses of paper, printing, binding, map-engraving, authors' fees, and 'entering Stationer's Hall', but a large proportion of those expenses was spent on advertising. By the late 1850s over 100 newspapers, periodicals and trade magazines had carried advertisements for Murray's books, and of Bowen's *Handbook*'s expenses, 9% was spent on advertising.[89] Murray accounts ledgers show a profits spike in 1854, when Bowen's edition was published, and that same year Bowen sold 1942 copies – not insignificant given the fifteen-shilling price tag, worth at least seventy pounds today.[90] By 1864 his edition was in profit. It was also well reviewed. The *Spectator* praised it as

'authentic' cultural experience. The term 'tourist', coined in the late eighteenth century, took off with Thomas Cook, who from 1841 used the railways to develop packaged tours, and in 1855 organised the first Cook's tour to Europe. The first packaged cruise to Greece was offered in 1833: three weeks aboard the *Francesco Primo* touring Naples, the Ionian Islands, Navarino Bay, then Nauplion to Constantinople.

[86] Ingold, p. 78.

[87] Bowen, p. 1.

[88] Schaff, p. 106.

[89] John Murray Archive, copies ledgers, MS.42730, p.57 and MS.42731, p.255.

[90] Conversion calculated using the Measuring Worth purchasing power calculator. <www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/relativevalue.php> [accessed 26 August 2021].

'one of the best of Murray's well-known series.'[91] Another review praised the *Handbook* for leaving 'a deep and lasting mark on English classical literature.' It continued:

> The student at the university, the mature scholar whose delight is still in the 'tale of Troy divine', the traveller in the Levant, and even that all-knowing person the general reader, are all beholden far more than they know to Sir George Bowen's journeyings and researches amongst the scenes and localities enshrined in the immortal literature of Greece. Take up any recent manual of classical geography, school edition of Homer, popular encyclopaedia, gazeteer, or the like works, and the probabilities are at least fifty to one that the descriptions there given of Greek topography and scenery are for the most part taken from his writings, with or without acknowledgement, but generally without.[92]

Despite Murray's desire for up-to-date accuracy, Bowen's *Handbook* remained the only guidebook to Greece in any language for eighteen years. The 1872 edition, revised by R.G. Watson, a diplomat in Constantinople and Athens, added new routes and updated advice, but repeated the bulk of Bowen's introduction, and included notes Bowen sent in 1859 for an edition commissioned but never completed, owning to his promotion to the Governorship of Queensland and 'armed conflicts on the border between Greece and Turkey.'[93] Bowen's voice remained audible for at least twenty-eight years after that. The 1896 Murray *Handbook* retained much of Bowen's text, as did the almost identical 1900 edition, the last in the series before it was sold.[94]

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[91] 'Thirty Years of Colonial Government', *Spectator,* 5 July 1890, p. 20.

[92] 'Sir George Bowen as an author', *Colonist*, 19 November 1874, p. 3. Handbooks were also plundered by novelists for landscape descriptions, or to inspire adventure stories for children, which in turn stimulated further travel. Jonathan Keates shows how the idea and actuality of 'abroad' permeated Victorian fiction, and that Trollope's *Nina Balatka* draws on details from Murray's *Southern Germany* which he took on his travels. See Keates, pp. 85-99.

[93] Lister, p. 19.

[94] Margarita Dritsas examines changes in tone between the 1840 and 1872 editions. The 1872 changes she notes were in fact repeated from Bowen's 1854 edition, published eighteen years earlier. One important change was that the 1872 edition included for the first time a section by a Greek, Professor Roussopoulos. Margarita Dritsas, 'From Travellers Accounts to Travel Books and Guide Books: the formation of a Greek tourism market in the nineteenth century', *Tourismos*, 1 (2006), 29-54 (p. 32).

Thus empirical knowledge of Greece was brought home to British readers, making Bowen what Mary Louise Pratt terms a 'transculturator', his writing a 'key instrument in creating the "domestic subject" of empire.'[95] In 1854 Murray handbooks were described as exerting 'considerable influence, not only upon the comfort of our English public in its autumnal peregrinations, but also in determining the point of view in which Englishmen regard nations of the Continent.'[96] Edward Said argues that this was how Orientalist ideas became *idées reçues,* which were anxiously repeated to create a tradition of unquestioned assumptions about the Orient that fed into the perceived power imbalance between East and West.[97] Bowen's observations on the Ionian Islands were so regularly repeated that they became the accepted British view, transformed into fact. When his Ionian Islands pamphlet was quoted by Colonial Secretary Sir John Pakington in a Parliamentary debate on 5 April 1852, Bowen boasted to Murray that his information had become 'quite the text book of the Colonial Office on the subject.'[98] As John Darwin notes, 'To an extent we are gradually beginning to notice, the return flows of experience, scientific information and academic talent exerted a powerful influence upon elite culture in Britain.'[99] According to Pratt,

> Empires create in the imperial centre of power an obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. It becomes dependent on others to know itself. Travel writing [...] is heavily organized in the service of that need.[100]

Thus, Bowen helped to systematise and shape perceptions of Other and of self.

Successive editions of Murray's handbooks to Greece also testify to Greece's evolution as a Victorian destination, to which they contributed. Bowen wrote with dry humour in 1854: 'A quarter of a century ago, or even much later, a "Chapter on Inns" in

[95] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 3.

[96] *Quarterly Review,* January 1854, p. 45.

[97] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995).

[98] GFB to JM, 22 April 1852.

[99] Darwin, p. 5.

[100] Ibid., p. 4.

Greece would have resembled the "Chapter on Snakes" in a certain work on Ireland; and which chapter simply contained the words "There are no snakes in this country."'[101] The tent recommended in 1845 in case there was no accommodation, or an epidemic forced the traveller to be 'independent of the state of the health of the town', was by 1854 deemed unnecessary, and by 1896 there were (relatively) first class hotels in all major towns.[102] In 1845 there were no direct ships from Britain to Greece; by 1896 'large and well-appointed' Greek and British steamers sailed direct from London and Liverpool.[103] In 1854 Greek journeys were made almost entirely on horseback; by 1896 carriage roads were few or dilapidated, but there were fifteen railways with three more opening imminently.[104] Although Bowen met some redoubtable female travellers, he fails to mention women travellers in his 1854 edition, but by 1896 'ladies in moderately robust health' would enjoy exploring the Greek interior, provided they were 'prepared to rough it with cheerfulness and good temper'.[105]

Murray's handbooks were so powerful that they could alter the destinations themselves. One reviewer noted that a rapid increase of English tourists 'usually coincides with the opening of a new field by the handbooks of Murray.'[106] Arbiters of taste, Handbooks could make or break a hotel or even a town. In 1853 Hillard wrote: 'From St Petersburg to Seville, from Ostend to Constantinople, there is not an inn-keeper who does not turn pale at the name of Murray.'[107] Innkeepers and tradesmen even resorted to bribery. The 1845 handbook for the East cautioned against imposters posing as handbook contributors to extort money in return for recommendations.[108]

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[101] Ibid., p. 20.

[102] *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople* (1845), p. xvii; *A Handbook for Travellers in Greece* (1854), p. 5; *A Handbook for Travellers in Greece* (London: John Murray, 1896), p. xxx.

[103] *A Handbook for Travellers in Greece* (1896), p. xxiii.

[104] Bowen, p. 3*; A Handbook for Travellers in Greece*, (1896), p. xxxiii.

[105] Ibid., p. xxxiv, p. xxxvii.

[106] 'The *Handbook for Syria and Palestine', Saturday Review*, 30 October 1858, pp. 426-8.

[107] Cited in Lister, p. 2.

[108] 'Preface', in *A Handbook for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor and Constantinople*, (1845).

However, when Murray's handbook series was sold in 1901, Henry Pullen, a prolific editor, conceded that the handbooks were written for 'a class of travellers which has ceased to exist, and their raison d'être is gone.'[109] Increasingly regarded as outdated and over-literary and historical, Murray's handbooks were superseded by Baedeker's, which seemed less elitist and more contemporary.[110] Nevertheless, elements of Bowen's approach have survived in some contemporary Greek guidebooks such as Nigel McGilchrist's *Greek Islands* (2010).[111] Archaeological discoveries, and expanding and increasingly complex tourism and communications, have imposed growing demands on Greek guidebook writers, and many books have consequently become more detailed and sophisticated. While Bowen devoted a single volume to Greece, McGilchrist devotes twenty volumes to the Aegean Islands alone. Nonetheless, like Bowen, McGilchrist is a sympathetic and knowledgeable Oxford classicist with unobtrusive scholarship, and an intended readership of educated, energetic and independent-minded travellers. He relishes the way being in Greece illuminates the ancient stories and relies on trustworthy personal experience which travellers are invited to correct and enhance. As such, McGilchrist can be seen as Bowen's heir.

To conclude, Bowen's *Handbook* was a product and instrument of the interconnected global circulation of people, commodities and ideas – the British world-system – that characterised the Victorian age. It addressed tensions between systematisation and liberty, conformity and individuality, objectivity and subjectivity,

[109] W. Pullen to JM IV, 29 May 1901, John Murray Archive, MS.40987.

[110] Gráinne Goodwin and Gordon Johnston, 'Guidebook publishing in the nineteenth century: John Murray's Handbooks for Travellers', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 17 (2012), 43-61. This argues that the handbooks grew up with the Athenaeum members and *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh Review*-reading set, but failed to make the transition to the next generation, the British middle and lower middle class 'excursionists', for whom Baedeker with its clearer maps, and other less erudite guidebook series such as Cook's, were more appealing.

[111] Nigel McGilchrist, *McGilchrist's Greek Islands* (London: Genius Loci, 2010). See also John Freely and Maureen Freely, *Complete Guide to Greece* (Littlehampton: G. Philip, 1974); John Freely, *Strolling Through Athens: Fourteen Unforgettable Walks through Europe's Oldest City,* 2nd edn (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004); John Freely *The Cyclades: Discovering the Greek Islands of the Aegean* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006); John Freely *The Ionian Islands: Corfu, Cephalonia and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris. 2008).

and shaped itself into a hybrid text emblematic of both reason and the imagination. In some ways it was a dispassionate endeavour, attempting to translate one culture for another. But by navigating tactfully around Murray's corporate schema, Bowen also conveyed elements of his individuality. By pushing at Murray's formal boundaries, Bowen helped elevate guidebooks to a new level of detail, accuracy and sophistication, and provided a valuable core sample of a country's language, history and culture, which he stamped with his distinctive character. He helped to break literary ground, create space in the market for a new class of traveller, and influence guidebook writing and tourism today.

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