

Chapter 1

Empires of Travel: British Guide Books and Cultural Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries¹

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When the Castle Line shipping company first published its Guide to South Africa in the 1890s, it declared that it was for the use of 'Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids and Settlers'. It is an intriguing group of middle-class travellers which reflects the manner in which 19th-century imperialism and its associated shipping lines sought to capture an essentially bourgeois market. Indeed the very existence of the guides reflected the existence and expansion of just that market. The **Castle Line Guides** were but one example of a whole range of imperial guides produced in the 19th century to satisfy the demands of a wide spectrum of middle-class readers beyond the four acknowledged by the Castle Line – administrators, members of all manner of technical and professional services, **missionaries and teachers, businessmen and the ubiquitous officers** from the army and the largest navy the world had seen. Some of these people travelled with **servants**, who may also have had access to the guide-books. Moreover, not all settlers were driven to travel by poverty and displacement. Many had capital and sought social and economic advancement in new geographical contexts. Women, of course, featured among several of these categories as **settlers, missionaries, teachers, servants, wives, wealthy travellers and, from the late 19th century, as professionals too.**

Indeed we often miss the fact that the British and other empires were not only empires of war, of economic exploitation, of settlement and of cultural diffusion. They were also increasingly **empires of travel**. They were playgrounds for the rich or the merely comfortable. They were places where various forms of cultural heritage could be explored. As well as locations for the spread of Christianity, the supposed working out of a divine and evangelical purpose, they offered the best evidence of progress, that defining bourgeois philosophy of the age. They neatly

demonstrated the onward march of modernism, as particularly expressed in the spread of the technology of steam, the telegraph, sanitation, urbanism and western science and medicine. In the European empires, travellers pursued an essentially schizophrenic purpose. On the one hand, they appeared to seek other cultures, of both past and present, other climes, other landscapes, other flora and fauna, sometimes other morals; on the other hand, they also charted the comforting extension of what they saw as their own achievements and their own mores. For the British, being imperial was being modern and that was the fundamental value to which all other values referred.

Among these empires, the British inevitably saw themselves as supreme. Almost more than any other, they indulged in the obsessive collection of data which Thomas Richards has characterised as the imperial archive (Richards, 1993). The empire was a vast laboratory offering opportunities for the complete taxonomising of the globe. There can be no better insight into the ideology of modern empire than the notion that such an ambition was achievable at all. Through empire the world could be engrossed and enumerated, identified and indexed. Mapping was, of course, seen as a vital part of this embracing and exposing of the globe: the imperial project was, in many respects, a cartographic one. The East India Company began the great surveys of India in the 18th century. The more technically advanced great trigonometrical survey began at the beginning of the 19th century and was developed from the 1820s (Edney, 1997).

Major cartographic projects were similarly developed in South and North America, in Australasia and, by the end of the century, in Africa (Stone, 1995). Capitalists and settlers, administrators and soldiers, anthropologists and foresters all required maps. And this fascination with the morphology of the land was, of course, matched by the careful surveys of coastlines and oceans which followed the era of oceanographic exploration in the 18th century. The British Admiralty commissioned major surveys like those of Captains Matthew Flinders on the coasts of Australia or William Owen on the East Coast of Africa (Admiralty Hydrographic Department, 1966, 1967). The 'Pilots' are coastal guide-books, which retained their essentially imperial nature long after decolonisation. Their work fed into the series of published **'pilots'** through which the coasts of empire were captured, analysed and laid bare for the use of mariners feeling their way along them. The globe could thus be reduced, compressed within the covers of a few books and atlases, encapsulated within a single room.

The development of the travellers' handbook or guide can be seen as a central aspect of this process of marking and miniaturisation. Yet they have

never received the attention they deserve. It is perhaps tempting to see them as merely the ephemeral help-mates of the jaded and arrogant imperial traveller. In fact, they unveil a complete mindset. Their compilers and publishers sought to offer the first complete descriptions of the territories and regions to which they were devoted. Often they were inexorable in their gazetteering gaze, few places being so insignificant as to be left out. But as we shall see they were also obsessed, among other things, with historicisation, with progress, with economic development, with architecture, and with the development of modern urban forms. The contrasts, or in some cases similarities, between them and the modern Lonely Planet and Rough Guides are intriguing and reflect the dramatic changes, and also continuities, that are characteristic of the final decades of the 20th century.

The guide-books also illuminate and modify at least three of the central aspects of the oft-quoted work of Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 1983). On the **one** hand, their existence, their form and their repeated editions reflect the enormous growth of 'print capitalism' in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the technical advances and the cheapening of unit cost which made these guides readily available to all. Moreover, many of their guides strengthened their connections with imperial enterprise, both in its large- and small-scale guises, by publishing advertisements for all manner of enterprises, shipping lines, mines, hotels, shops and railway companies, among others. **Second**, they tell us something about an 'imagined community' which extended far beyond Anderson's efforts to explain the emergence of the nation. Anderson's imperial examples are generally drawn from the Spanish empire where he makes a severe distinction between the metropolitan Hispanic and the Creole as a device to explain his contentious idea that nationalism is invented in the New World. But the British Empire was not like that. People born in the Dominions served elsewhere in the British 'dependent empire', even up to the rank of governor. Analysis of the guides indicates that they were directed at a white imperial 'imagined community' which was global in its extent. Implicit in their pages is the notion, assiduously propagated by such figures as John Buchan and J.A. Cramb, that imperialism constituted an antidote to nationalism. In 1900, Cramb, writing propaganda about the Boer War, even wrote of 'the dying principle of Nationality' (Mackenzie, 1999). Indeed, the central myth of these guides is that there was an anglo-phone supra-nationality which embraced the world through travel and the traveller's gazetteer. Finally, when Anderson included an additional chapter on 'Census, Map, Museum' in his new edition in 1991, he could have included the Guide-book for, in a very real sense, these guides engrossed the other three in popular form (Anderson, 1983: chap. 10).

The new style of travellers' handbook and guide has its origins in the 1830s. The German publisher, **Karl Baedeker**, was of course one of its most famous exponents and he eventually produced guides to imperial territories like Egypt (which effectively became part of the British Empire in 1882), Canada and India. Baedeker issued a guide to Lower Egypt, in English, in 1877 and to Upper Egypt in 1891. They had, of course, appeared in German much earlier. German Egyptologists supplied the technical historical and archaeological information. Baedeker published in Leipzig and was published in London by T. Fisher Unwin and in New York by Charles Scribner. Some aspects of 'print capitalism' were highly international (information from the British Library catalogue and US Library of Congress National Union Catalogue). But the emphasis in this chapter is going to be on those published in Britain, primarily for the anglophone world. When these works are surveyed and carefully analysed, it becomes apparent that the British Empire was built not only on the sword and the gun, the Bible and the flag, Christianity and commerce but also the guide and the map. This was as true of informal empire as it was of the formal. What follows is an examination of some typical, even classic, guides. It is not an exhaustive survey but it is certainly representative.

The most notable British supplier of handbooks was the publisher John Murray. A significant aspect of Murray's reputation was the successful publication of the works of explorers. For example, Murray published David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in Southern Africa* in 1857, one of the great best-sellers of the 19th century. Murray began to issue travellers' handbooks in the 1830s and it was a project which continued to occupy the publishing house until at least the middle of the 20th century. Among the earliest guides was a *Handbook for Travellers on the Continent* [of Europe], which was first published in 1836 and sold 10,000 copies within five years. It was soon being broken down into the individual countries. This was followed by guides to the English counties, London and Ireland. Switzerland appeared in 1838, North Germany in 1841, North Italy in 1842 and Central Italy in 1843. As well as Egypt and India, Murray had reached out to Algeria in 1873 and Japan in 1884, as the firm very swiftly went beyond Britain and Europe in a symbolic reaching outwards which both followed and reinforced the tentacles of imperialism.

The importance of Egypt in European tourism is well represented by the manner in which guide-books were issued by both Baedeker and Murray fairly early in their global expansion (John Murray, 1847; Wilkinson, 1847; Wilson, 1895). Murray issued his first guide to India, embracing mainly the presidencies of Bombay and Madras, in 1859, a

mere two years after the great revolt of 1857, and a year after the abolition of the East India Company and the imposition of direct Crown rule in the Indian sub-continent. Print capitalism thus seemed intent on acknowledging the shift from company to state. But the scale of the operation was such that some years elapsed before the entire Indian Empire was covered. A series of separate volumes were issued from the late 1870s, by which time Queen Victoria had been proclaimed Empress and one of the major railway networks of the world was in the process of construction. Four volumes covering Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Punjab and the North West appeared between 1879 and 1883. But in 1891 something interesting happens. Whereas Murray had divided up his European guide into separate nation states (sometimes preceding political unification), the Indian guides were now combined into one volume. It is intriguing that this fits into the imperial propaganda of the time: that the British had created a great empire out of a congeries of states, that they were forging an astonishing union out of a South Asian Balkans. **If Europe offered the nation as the organising principle of the guide, India reflected the assimilative supra-nationality of empire.** This single-volume handbook, which initially threw the net even wider by including sections on Burma and Ceylon, continued to be issued in much the same format until the 1960s. Indeed, for much of this period, the handbooks received a semi-official stamp of approval since the prefaces and the entries on Ceylon and Burma were written by imperial officials (John Murray, 1906 [10th edn, 1919; 20th edn, 1965]). Murray was proud that the first edition of the *Handbook* had appeared before the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, edited by Sir W.W. Hunter. Officials involved with Murray included Captain E.B. Eastwick, MP, Sir George Forest, Sir Arthur Gordon, Charles Buckland and, later, Sir John Cumming and Sir Evan Cotton. In such ways were these handbooks given almost an official imperial imprimatur. By the 1960s, the editing of the *Handbook* had passed to the academic Professor Rushbrook Williams, who based his work on the 18th edition edited by Sir Arthur Lothian.

Murray's followed Baedeker in organising their handbooks with a large quantity of preliminary information, often the most interesting material of all for the historian, the pages numbered in Roman numerals, before moving on to the tours and gazetteer numbered in Arabic. The 1906 edition, the fifth in the single-volume format, contained no fewer than cxv (115) general pages and 524 of the guide. By the 10th edition of 1919 (the frequency of new editions had been stepped up), this had risen to clxxv (175) and 726. Although the *Handbook* was sold on the basis of the 'glorious field which in India is opened up for the enjoyment of travel and sport' (John Murray, 1906: vi), it was effectively a major text-book of

considerable value to all who worked there. That work, and British rule in general, were clearly sanctified by the history of the British in the sub-continent, particularly the history of their martyrdoms in the Mutiny or revolt of 1857. Indeed, in the third edition of 1898, a lengthy section on the history of the Mutiny was added. There were also major sections on the rulers of India before the British (emphasising, of course, the tradition of foreign rule), on the British administrative and communications systems, on population (based on the most recent British census in India), on irrigation, famine, plague and on 'sport', which generally meant opportunities for shooting game, both large and small. It may well be debated whether these extensions represented the growing self-confidence of empire, the 'illusion of permanence' or whether they represented a developing *fin de siècle* apprehension. The text explicitly emphasises the former over the latter.

In the traditional guide-book manner, advice was also offered on clothing, health, the engaging of servants, accommodation, useful functionaries and the like. Further emphasis was placed upon the antiquities, the architecture and arts of India and the efforts of the British to preserve these through the Archaeological Survey and the schools of art founded by the British. Interestingly, the figure most frequently quoted was the 19th-century British authority on Indian architecture and sculpture, James Fergusson, who was himself obsessed with notions of 'golden ages' and cultural decline (Fergusson, 1866, 1876; Mackenzie, 1995: 95–6; Mitter, 1977). The *Handbook* also contained a description of the voyage to India, a very specialist genre of its own to which I shall return later.

The gazetteer was organised in the form of railway tours. This had the effect of emphasising a network which was quintessentially British and which embraced and consolidated the whole of the sub-continent, from the coastal ports to almost every part of the interior, to the princely states and even into the foothills of the Himalayas and the mountains of the North-West frontier. India was to be unlocked and known through the traveller's exploitation of the new modernist technology. The very form of the *Handbook* imposed a web, a grid which neatly represented the linearity of modernism, a version of the coordinates of the map. Side excursions to antiquities or caves were to be made from railway stations and, in the larger centres, their attendant hotels. Distant regions for the more adventurous would likewise be accessed from a convenient railhead.

A number of powerful themes emerge in these tour descriptions. One is a **fascination with the growth** of towns and cities, with the development of their westernised architecture and transportation systems, with statuary and **memorials** devoted to Queen Victoria, notable administrators and

heroes of the 19th century and with public and botanical gardens. The description of each distinctively British urban centre or cantonment was invariably juxtaposed with advice on excursions into the native town. Thus, the modern and the exotic are not located on separate continents but in adjacent space. The European traveller can live within his or her own culture, with only the climate and the colour of the servants as a reminder of location, and make comfortably brief forays into the neighbouring oriental territory. In a sense, metropole and periphery are juxtaposed. Thus, the traveller is enjoined to be careful to alight at the cantonment and not the town station at many places (John Murray, 1906: xxii). To get off at the town would cause serious disorientation between the railway technology and the traditional sights and sounds of India, as well as being simply inconvenient for the havens of hotels and clubs. Thus, there was a severe distinction between exotic space, the indigenous environment, and modernist place, the site of European order.

The second major emphasis is upon **history**. Each place is historicised in one way or another. Sometimes, this relates to the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or Sikh past, to the arrival of conquerors, notably the Mughals, their battles and the establishment of their rule. But by far the greatest portion of this historicisation relates to the British themselves. Inevitably, there are some references to the battles and events of the 18th century, such as the Black Hole of Calcutta of 1756. There are references too to the battle-grounds of the Mysore, Maratha, Pindari and Sikh wars. But the relentless historical allusiveness of the *Handbook* particularly concentrates on the 1857 Mutiny. Almost every place in northern and central India seems to have a story to tell. In the major centres of the Mutiny, like Delhi or Lucknow or Cawnpore (now Kanpur), many pages are devoted to the events of 1857. The Lucknow residency was described as 'the spot which all Englishmen will wish to visit first', while the chief interest of Cawnpore lay in the 'sad events' and 'cowardly massacre' of June 1857 (John Murray, 1906: 285, 301). Each place was full of inscriptions, tablets, statues, memorials and sculptures. It was as though the British were seeking to overlay the historical and artistic exuberance of India with their own more solemn patina. Martyrdom offered legitimacy. And the traveller along the web of railway lines stopped off to view these imperial sites of memory, the architecture and sculpture of public history which seemed to proliferate everywhere, offering that legitimating reassurance.

There were other forms of reassurance too, above all the command which the British had established over the Indian environment. As we have seen, railway and telegraph lines, towns and cities, modernising architectural forms all contributed to this. But there were additional

important signifiers. Engineering achievements produced the loops, tunnels, reversing and run-off lines of the railways over the *ghats* (or western hills), into the Himalayas or the North-West. Above all, the bridges which spanned the great rivers of India were seen as one of the noblest expressions of imperial power. Similar sensations were promoted through the British reconstruction and extension of the canals, the great irrigation systems of India; the creation of extensive botanic gardens; and the protection of vast forest areas. The Indian environment provided opportunities for Europeans to enjoy *shikar*, hunting and shooting across the Indian landscape in a form of symbolic domination of the natural world that struck resonances with ancient cultures, with medieval European kingship and, above all, with the Mughals themselves. Thus, the guides became passports to 'the empire of nature', the classic control of the environment afforded to the upper-class traveller by 'field sports' and the gun (Mackenzie, 1988). In an intriguing paradox, forests and hunting grounds were wild, beyond the pale of civilisation but thereby attractive and fascinating. Indeed, forest reservation and the cultural overlay of the hunt served to throw the imperial net upon them. In all these ways, the *Handbook* was more than a guide to travel. It was a relentless textualisation of dominion and control, expressed through the places and incidents and forms of both past and present through which that imperial power was supremely expressed.

Two other important **sources for the publication of imperial guides** were travel firms and shipping companies. The celebrated agency Thomas Cook and Son, so often credited with inventing the concept of the package tour, also issued guides. The first of these may well date from 1845 and covered a journey no more exotic than to the North-West of England. From 1875, these handbooks became a more prominent part of Cook's business selling as many as 10,000 copies per year (at five shillings or, in modern terms, 25 pence each), and covering many locations in the wider world, including North Africa. They were regarded by the company as a 'useful sideline' which paid their way while 'providing a permanent means of propaganda' (Brendon, 1991: 272, see also 36–7, 46, 157). Booksellers were consequently suspicious of them but as their quality improved they became very similar in format to the guides issued by Murray or by another celebrated publisher that became active in the field, Macmillan. As the market clearly expanded, Macmillan issued the *Guide to Egypt and the Sudan Including a Description of the Route through Uganda and Mombasa* in 1901. It reached its fifth edition in 1908. Stanford also issued maps (handily within boards) for travellers, e.g. 'Map of the Nile from the Equatorial Lakes to the Mediterranean embracing the Egyptian Sudan and Abyssinia'

was issued in July 1889 (well before the British re-conquest of the Sudan in 1898) and about the same time a 'Map of Ceylon'. Cook concentrated on North Africa and the Middle East, important locations of their tours but a crowded market given the interests of Baedeker, Murray and Macmillan in the same region. But, presumably spotting a gap in the market, Cook's also issued a guide to Burma.

The shipping lines, whose foundation and success were inseparably bound up with the development of the British Empire, were inevitably eager to promote the concept of travel as a pleasurable and healthy, as well as a profitable and culturally enlightened activity. As the speed of ships was enhanced by their triple expansion, and later turbine, engines, so their size and the range of their amenities grew. It became important for the shipping companies to emphasise the ease and comfort with which travellers could access imperial territories, as settlers or businessmen, tourists or invalids, administrators or missionaries. A number of companies began to issue guides and their content also helps to illuminate many aspects of cultural and other forms of imperialism.

The *Orient Line Guide* was first published for the Orient and Pacific Steam Navigation companies (which later amalgamated) by another important travel publisher, Edward Stanford, in 1882. It was sub-titled 'chapters for travellers by sea and by land' and was written by a prolific author, W.J. Loftie, an Irishman by birth who also held the office of assistant chaplain to the Chapel Royal (Loftie, various editions). Subsequent editions of this guide were issued in 1885, 1888, 1890, 1894 and 1901 and intriguing changes in emphasis occurred through these dates. The guides themselves celebrated the advances that were taking place in ship size and technology as the Orient Line introduced new and larger steamers which were described as 'vast floating hotels'. Indeed the guide, which was published in an impressive hard-back, illustrated form for a mere half crown (or 12½ pence), concentrated a great deal on western science and engineering. As well as the inevitable illustrations of ships and plans of their accommodation, there were chapters on astronomy, seamanship, navigation, meteorology and surprisingly complex technical details were offered on the production of electricity at sea and on refrigeration. In addition to all the usual tips on clothing, hygiene and medical aspects of the voyage, table after table of thermometer readings were offered to illustrate the equable temperatures and healthy air of the sea, emphasised by the 'tonic value of ozone' and the absence of fumes or any oxygen loss as a result of lighting by electricity.

Murray's *Handbooks* to India contained a section on the sea journey to India, which particularly emphasised the historic naval battles which had

occurred on the route (John Murray, 1906: xxx–xxxvii). The *Orient Guide* took this idea further, even commissioning a specific author to contribute the naval material (Loftie, 1889: chap. 4). Battles of the Dutch wars of the 17th century, the 18th-century wars against France and, of course, the Napoleonic period were all described, developing into a nautical litany of Gravesend, Cap La Hogue, Cape St Vincent, Trafalgar and the Nile. If the events of 1857 somehow sanctified British rule in India, these battles justified British global power. Indeed, the sense of possession was particularly emphasised in the *Orient Guide*. The British acquisition of Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Aden, even such obscure islands as Perim and Socotra, were all described. If the sea lanes of the world were dominated by the British Royal Navy, so was the commerce of the globe. The oft-quoted statistic that nine out of ten ships passing through the Suez Canal were British matched the notion that it was possible to sail to Australia calling at, or observing, a string of British possessions on the way, ranging from the celebrated and important Ceylon to the little-known Diego Garcia (Loftie, 1889: 160, 182–91).

The *Orient Guide* considered that the amazing rise of Australia offered a solace for the loss of the American colonies. It constituted a new home for the British race, a genuinely New World which had been acquired ‘without the sword’, without the need for any conquest. Since it had been wrested from ‘barbarism and desolation’, there was ‘no ancient civilisation to reproach us with its extinction’ (Loftie, 1889: 304, 335). Aborigines were thus dismissed with barely a mention. The traveller could be comforted by what seemed to the Reverend W.J. Loftie to be racial, demographic and cultural truisms. The final section of the guide evaluated the economic, social and political potential of the Australasian and Pacific colonies. Descriptions of the landscape and resources of each colony tended to give way rapidly to an enthusiastic description of the extent of western civilisation demonstrated through the development and appearance of cities. This mirrored the predilections of the settlers themselves who tended to be town- rather than rural-dwellers. The cities were, of course, emblematic of modernism and Englishness and this quality of coherence with the parent culture was found to be particularly evident in New Zealand, the England of the South Seas. There the Maori wars had promoted the decline of the indigenous people and the race problem had been solved by ‘the decrease in the number of natives’ (Loftie, 1889: 347). There was thus nothing to impede New Zealand’s essential Britishness.

By 1901, the *Orient Guide* had cut down on some of the complex material it had offered on the sea journey and naval battles. Instead, it expanded its sections on the wonders of Egypt and, in particular, on the

Australasian colonies. Greater use was made of official statistics and more was made of economic potential, the growth of trade and revenues. An entire chapter was now devoted to the cities of the antipodes, filled with architectural splendours and all created in Victoria's reign. The traveller or settler was reassured that 'if the rich colouring and barbarian picturesqueness of Asian and south-eastern Europe are absent, their smells and nameless abominations are absent too' (Loftie, 1901: chap. XVII, 231). It was perhaps also reassuring that absolutely no mention whatsoever was made of penal colonies and the origins of many settlers in the transportation of alleged convicts. However, by 1901, it was impossible to be as dismissive about the Maori as the earlier editions had been.

Loftie was born in 1839 and died in 1911. There can be little doubt that the Orient guides bore the stamp of this rather elderly, old-fashioned and conservative clergyman. The *Union–Castle Guides to South Africa* conveyed a slightly different tone, although they too were inevitably deeply steeped in the imperial world view. The Union and Castle lines, the latter inseparably associated with Sir Donald Currie, had been trading to the Cape for several decades. They amalgamated in 1900, by which time the *Guide* was well established. Currie had first issued a *Handbook and Emigrants' Guide to South Africa* in 1888 but, in 1893, he heard of a new publication, *Brown's Guide to South Africa*, a private venture produced by two brothers. This guide was designed to encourage the British to emigrate to or invest in the South African goldfields which by then were beginning to boom. It was even sold from hawkers' barrows outside the Stock Exchange in London and, within a few weeks, the entire first edition of 2000 had been sold. Currie bought out the two editors and it became the *Castle Line Guide to South Africa*, issued annually until the 1960s. The Brown brothers continued to edit the *Guide* for over 45 years and were succeeded by a son of one of them (Murray, 1953: 311–12). The *Guide* added East Africa to its area of interest in 1910 and ultimately became so bulky that it was divided into two volumes in 1950. To give some impression of this inflation in size, the 1899–1900 issue, published during the Boer War, was 420 pages in length. It reached nearly 500 pages in 1911–12, 914 in 1930, 1163 in 1948 with the two volumes combined weighing in at almost 1300 pages in 1957 (Brown & Brown, 1899–1900 and subsequent editions to 1957). In later years, it added an atlas running to more than 60 maps. All guides went through this process of elephantiasis, an inflation which neatly represented the continuing cultural significance of imperialism.

The earliest editions offered information on how to book seats on coaches for the goldfields but as railway lines spread throughout southern Africa, the *Guide* was able to adopt the railway tours approach. Like the

Orient Guide, it was eager to boost the virtues of the ships and the health-giving properties of an ocean voyage. Indeed, a great deal of attention was devoted to the climate and healthy characteristics of southern Africa, with extensive testimonies from medical men and quotations from medical works. The obsession with health and climate, which John Pemble identified in his book *The Mediterranean Passion*, was transferred to Africa (Pemble, 1987). Sulphur and hot springs were described in various places at the Cape and putative health resorts with hotels and sanatoria were identified in the mountains and in the drier areas of the region. There was considerable detail on pulmonary ailments and other diseases which benefited from a stay in Africa (Castle Line, 1911–12: vii–viii and passim).

The prime focus, however, was unquestionably on economic matters. The mineral and other resources were examined in infinite detail as were the fortunes of the various mining companies and concessions. A good deal of information was also offered on prospects for the purchase of land and for agricultural development. The range of potential crops and stock and the characteristics of each area were described in some detail, together with marketing opportunities. The prospects for the production of fruit and for its successful transportation by Castle ships to Britain were analysed. But, as always, there was a powerful emphasis on modernity, on cities, their architecture, facilities and transport as well as on the railway networks. Advice was offered on wages, on black labour, and on the cost of living.

One implicit theme is to be found running through all the early editions and that is the backwardness of both the Portuguese and the Boers. The Portuguese are seen as having largely failed to develop their colonies and, as late as the 1911–12 edition, Mozambique is described as being ‘not entirely under control’ (which was probably a not inaccurate assessment) (Castle Line, 1911–12: 117A). The Boers are depicted as being resistant to progress, the enemies of the modernising efforts of the British. They are described, for example, as having a ‘prejudice against the iron horse’, marking them out as enemies of modernism and, therefore, of imperialism (Castle Line, 1911–12: 25). The rural areas of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were inevitably contrasted with the equivalents and the forward-looking towns of the Cape and Natal. After the Boer War, the tours of the country are specifically designed to take in the sites of the sieges and battles of the Boer War and the Boers continue to be described as the enemy even after 1910 when the creation of the Union of South Africa had ensured their political supremacy (for imperial pilgrimage to the metropole, see Lloyd, 1998). The Zulu and Boer Wars assume the role of the Mutiny in India, illustrating the early origins of battlefield tourism.

Monuments, statues and buildings were described in some detail, including often the costs of construction. Like India, southern Africa was full of sites of memory, together with the European historicisation of the landscape which offered legitimacy to white rule in general and British rule in particular.

The South African guides seem to be largely free of the overt social Darwinian racism which characterised Loftie's approach to Australia and New Zealand. This may have been because the prospect of extinction, which Loftie so confidently predicted in the Australasian case, was transparently impossible in southern Africa. Africans, however, are largely distinguished by their absence. Considering the size and extent of black populations in the region, the *Guide* succeeds in largely leaving them out of account. African customs are described as 'most interesting'. Some of the contemporary conventions about African culture are certainly repeated. The communal system of agriculture was described as ensuring that wealth was impossible but that poverty was unknown, an interesting balance that, for once, offered an implied critique of the extremes of wealth and poverty of capitalism. Fertile land, plenty of game and a favourable climate ensured that Africans were unwilling to work in the European economy. But the favourite African rulers of the whites were duly complimented. Moshesh of the Sotho was described as brave and talented, while Khama of the Nǃgato was considered to have been a 'remarkable man', an 'ardent Christian' who had built a 'handsome Gothic church'. However, the separatist Ethiopian church was seen as a 'menace' which helped to give Africans 'an inflated idea of their importance and their abilities' (Castle Line, 1911–12: 4, 129, 268A, 279, 341). The tourist mapping of South Africa could not fail to allude to some of the central political and racial issues of the day.

Guide-book authors allowed themselves moments of both irritation and eccentricity. The Browns' guide inveighed against tourists who helped to destroy some of the cave formations and paintings of South Africa, for example at the celebrated Cango Caves. In dealing with ostriches, they announced that the worst an attacking cock ostrich could do was sit on its victim. However, they wryly observed, science had not yet established how long an ostrich would continue to sit upon a man before releasing him (Castle Line, 1911–12: 359, 176). This is the only joke to be found in the *Guide*!

Perhaps the most eccentric and opinionated of the guides was that produced by Sir Algernon Aspinall (1871–1952) for the **West Indies**. This was first published in 1907, shortly after the Jamaica earthquake, and it seemed to provide Aspinall, a London barrister, with a reputation as a

West Indies expert that led him to sit on various colonial committees such as the West Indies Shipping Committee, the Cotton-growing and Cocoa Associations, the West Indies Currency and Air Transportation Committees, and the governing body of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. He was also the honorary commissioner of the West Indies exhibits at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924–25. His guide-book certainly had a strongly economic slant, infused with imperial sentiment.

In common with the other guides, he was anxious to portray the comforts of the modern sea voyage, together with the striking range of shipping companies that served the West Indies. He was also eager to point up the key historical moments in the imperial history of the British in the Caribbean. His frontispiece was an engraving in which De Grasse delivered his sword to Rodney on the Glorious First of April 1782, 'which secured to us our West Indian colonies' (Aspinall, 1907). The associations with other celebrated British admirals were highlighted, including Nelson's marriage on Anguilla in 1787 and his connection with Antigua, where he refitted in 1805. However, the history of slavery and of revolt in the West Indies was largely ignored. But while Aspinall clearly pursued the places and incidents which most interested him, he made it clear that his primary purpose was economic. His entry on each colony started with the history of white settlement and went on to detail products, the extent of trade and of revenues. [He spread out beyond the British territories, including entries on Danish, Dutch, French and American possessions.] In this first edition, most of the illustrations were from photographs taken by himself.

Like so many other guides, it was clearly a considerable success. By 1931, it had reached six editions. It had been taken over by another publisher, included territories previously omitted, and had begun to look much like the other imperial guides with detailed entries on transportation and facilities in each colony. Much material remained the same, although the tables of imports and exports, revenue and expenditure tended to disappear (Aspinall, 1931). It grew in size and, after Aspinall's death in 1952, continued to be revised by Professor J. Sydney Dash (Aspinall, 1960). Indeed, it is interesting that academics often take over the revision of guides in the more modern period.

The economic emphasis was also a prominent aspect of the *South American Handbook*, a major compilation of information. This was based upon works by W.H. Koebel (1872–1923), a journalist and writer who specialised in South America. He published a number of handbooks to individual countries before the First World War and was involved in a

special mission to the region for the British Government in 1919. His single-volume handbook was continued on an annual basis after his death (Davies, 1930). This work was designed primarily for businessmen, tourists and the framers of government policy. It specifically warned off speculative English-speaking settlers, although it described the very considerable opportunities for business and for people with capital. To make the political position quite clear, it actually included the complete text of Monroe's statement of his famous doctrine in December 1823 (Davies, 1930: 14, 17).

But, in many ways, it was a paean of praise to informal imperialism and the opportunities for British trade and investment. There were, therefore, both similarities and differences between guides to formal and informal empire. The former certainly gave a greater sense of 'possession' and were aimed at a wider constituency. The latter emphasised investment, trade and business generally. They combined tourism with business analysis.

The entries on each territory detailed the extent of British capital invested, the degree of British involvement in railway construction and operation and their activities in trade and shipping. The size of British communities, their clubs, sports, Masonic Lodges, churches and schools were enumerated in detail. Resources, opportunities for growth and the 'rules of engagement' under which trade was conducted, together with the impositions placed upon 'commercial travellers' were carefully laid out. As late as the 1930 edition, it was frequently pointed out that British investment was higher than that of the USA. But, in addition to all of this, the tourist information offered was very much akin to that laid out in the handbooks designed for formal imperial territories. While tourists were warned that they would find many 'primitive touches' in **South America**, they were also wonderfully reassured that afternoon tea, 'made as it ought to be made', was available in all the principal cities (Davies, 1930: 9–10). What more could the British tourist want?

There was perhaps a lot more. While the South American environment clearly offered distinctive experiences for the traveller, there were the usual constant reassurances about modernism. Hotels were comfortable and sanitation good. Buenos Aires, the sixth city of the world, was described as being 'of a renowned magnificence' (Davies, 1930: 47). Railways were generally efficient and often run by Britons. The British would find their own sports reassuringly disseminated in many countries of the region. There were also reassuring remarks about race. The 1930 edition suggested that 'to remove misconception...members of the Negro races in Argentina are insignificant in number', while a mere 350,000 of the population were described as being of 'mixed or inferior blood' (Davies,

1930: 101). Other reassuring comparisons were made. The size of each territory was often linked to that of one better known to the British, while the scenery of the Argentine southern lakes was likened to the Scottish Highlands, a very common world-wide comparison that never wholly makes sense (Davies, 1930: 104). In British Honduras, British Guiana and the Falklands or Malvinas, the British could be further reassured that they would enjoy formally administered British territories. In the case of Georgetown, British Guiana, they could find the 'finest cricket ground in the tropics' (Davies, 1930: 199). The handbook also included lengthy separate sections on shooting, angling and sport, shipping services, products, banking and insurance and railways, as well as a considerable number of classified advertisements. Although there are differences in emphasis, the handbook bears as many similar marks of the imperial world view as those for the territories directly administered by the British. And it is a world view which continues well into the post-Second World War era.

Travellers' handbooks and guide-books are an extremely rewarding source. They represent a significant element in the imperial taxonomy, a listing of place within a wider pre-modernist and sometimes threatening space. Such places abound with historical, modernising and economic significance, while the regions around offer both an ethnographic and a zoological nature to be penetrated in brief forays. Their objective is clearly the charting of progress, the development of the processes of imperial modernisation. Often they seem more concerned to emphasise the similarities with the imperial metropole rather than the exotic differences, though the latter could be penetrated by the more adventurous. In the period when imperial ideology, and the entire developmental philosophy, is reaching its apogee at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, they acted as significant sites of propaganda. They often contained large numbers of advertisements, which clearly helped to keep their sale price down and increase their circulation but, inevitably, they also represented the interests and objectives of the companies who helped to finance them. They also give the impression of activity, the pursuit of business or sport, settlement or even health. It is interesting that the '*Arandora Star*' *Cruise Guide*, issued by the Blue Star Line, 2nd edition, 1937, begins to offer a more modern sense of leisure and relaxation as the attributes of the voyage. This is an active, masculinist empire. Written by men, their concerns are essentially those of males, a bias perhaps reflected in the imperial project itself. As we become increasingly aware of the complexities of the involvement of women in empire, it would be intriguing to know how extensive their female readership was and what their women readers made of them.

Tourists, invalids and settlers were just as likely to be women and sometimes they even participated in the violent sports of empire.

But it is clear that the guide-books are entirely innocent of the spirit of apprehension and fear of coming degeneration which strikes the late Victorians. Anxieties about the so-called yellow peril, about the racial and cultural degeneration of the West, about the threats posed by other peoples, by microbes and by scientific laws of thermodynamics that were perceived to be inexorable are entirely absent from their concerns. So in any sense that the British Empire was in comparative decline in the face of the rapid industrialisation of the USA and of Germany. Although the elite may have communicated such anxieties to each other, popular materials steered well clear of them. And all the evidence points to the very considerable popularity of these handbooks and guides. They were often issued almost annually or ran through many editions. Publishers and shipping lines were eager to be involved in them. Apart from school texts and popular journals, they must have been a prime means whereby the imperial world view was transmitted to bourgeois travellers and, in some cases, settlers from other sections of the social spectrum. If they were seldom read in their entirety, they must have been extensively dipped into.

Moreover, it is a world view in which a modernist economic plenitude as well as cultural creativity are inexorably celebrated. In them, Europe reigned supreme, a hyper-real global entity. Non-Europeans seldom aspired to a coeval sharing in this modernist cargo, though, in some cases, an imperial conversion was possible, if at some distant time. The voice of the Other scarcely intrudes at all. In this, as in other matters, the guides are replete with structural silences. Indeed, implicit throughout these handbooks was the suggestion that they would only be used by dominant and not subordinate peoples, although it is hard to imagine that they did not reach the eyes of educated elites in India and the West Indies. Above all, they underscored writing and the text as the prerequisite of modernity, a popular expression of the enterprise of knowledge. Here was print capitalism devoted to an embryonic globalisation, a hierarchisation of modernism placed in contiguous and severely contrasting relations with a pre-modern exotic. These hierarchies could also be divided up on a regional basis. The Latin American countries were graded according to levels of investment, urban growth, infrastructural provision, in other words stage of modernisation. Thus the guides offered a geographical exhibitionary complex on a world-wide scale, embracing informal as well as formal empire.

Moreover, they absolutely confirm the view which I expressed 20 years ago, that the imperial ethos, far from being killed in the First World War as

so many historians used to argue, continues alive and well until at least the 1950s (Mackenzie, 1984). The genre of 19th-century imperial guide-book remains intact until the 1950s and 1960s. The format is the same. Sometimes the entries are almost identical over a period of more than 60 years. *The Union–Castle Guide to South and East Africa*, Murray’s *Handbook of India*, Aspinall’s *Guide to the West Indies* and the *South American Handbook* all sail on serenely into the 1960s and beyond. Some of the imperial sentiments are toned down but the approach is essentially the same. It is hard to escape the implication that the imperial world view, at least to a certain extent, survived decolonisation. The cultural mapping of the globe remained a prerogative of the wealthier West, at least until the tiger economies of the Pacific rim extended the pool of tourists. Yet, even then, it may be that the Lonely Planet and Rough Guides represent not so much a revolution but a neo-colonial continuity. It is certainly arguable that they continue to exhibit the cultural imperialism of the rich and advanced world, but there are also striking differences. They are generally no longer interested in statistics and in business opportunities, which have migrated into the work of specialist analysts. But their critical spirit, their concern with pleasure-seeking and their advice for minority groups like gays and lesbians do represent a striking break with the guides of the past. Their form of cultural imperialism would require another chapter. But there can certainly be little doubt that the imperial guides surveyed in this one were a major tool of imperialism. Large numbers of those involved in the imperial project in all its diversity must have mapped their way across both the cultures and the modernising tendencies of the Mediterranean world, the Middle East, India, Australasia, South and East Africa, the Caribbean and South America with the help of those amazingly detailed gazetteers, filled as they were with so many of the perceptions and prejudices of their age.

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