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# Like a rolling stone, R.A.H. Bickford-Smith (1859–1916) from Britain to Greece

*Maria Christina Chatziioanou*

How does it feel  
To be on your own  
With no direction home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone?

(Bob Dylan, 1965)

The phrase ‘rolling stone’ became very popular in the 1960s, in the music world of the west; a music group and a magazine were named after it, and Bob Dylan wrote his famous song *Like A Rolling Stone*.<sup>1</sup> This expression derives from the proverb *a rolling stone gathers no moss*, which indicates that a person who moves about a great deal and never settles down will not do well. People pay a price for being always on the move, in that they have no roots in a specific place (the original meaning); or people who keep moving avoid picking up responsibilities and obligations. After some 300 years of this interpretation, in the mid-1800s the value of gathering moss (and staying put) began to be questioned, and in current usage the phrase is most often used without any particular value judgement.

What Roandean Albert Henry Bickford-Smith has to do with rolling stones is not immediately obvious. Victorian scholar, Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians and barrister, he is known for his book *Greece under King George* (translated into Greek in 1993),<sup>2</sup> a work that almost all historians studying the Greek nineteenth century have consulted. In searching through *Google* to find information about him, I was directed via various links to the chat room of Bob Dylan fans. There, to my great surprise, I discovered that the phrase *a rolling stone gathers no moss* was attributed to Publilius



Fig.4.1: R.A.H. Bickford Smith; BSA Photographic Archive: BSAA7-4.

1. BobDylanTalk.com

2. Bickford-Smith 1893; the copy in the BSA is signed by the author. Greek translation edited by Lydia Papadaki.

Syrus,<sup>3</sup> a Latin writer of mimes, active in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. All that remains of his works is a collection of Sentences (*Sententiae*), a series of moral maxims in iambic and trochaic verse.<sup>4</sup> R.A.H. Bickford-Smith is one of the main editors of this Latin writer. Why did he butt into Roman literature? And, more to the point here, why did a Victorian barrister write about modern Greece? In order to understand his scholarly initiatives, we have to comprehend Bickford-Smith's cultural background, as well as his intellectual patterns and sources of inspiration.

There is no British biographical dictionary to my knowledge with an entry under his name. Bickford-Smith was not a conspicuous man, his career did not intersect with dramatic events in British or Greek history and it is difficult to get him into perspective. The constants in Bickford-Smith's intellectual make-up that influenced his actions were his education and his cultivation in a late Victorian milieu.

The only biographical data available hint at an affluent family background that provided Roandeu Albert Henry with a good education. He was born on 3 May 1859, eldest son of William Bickford-Smith (1827–99), who was Member of Parliament for Trevarno, at Helston, Cornwall. William Bickford-Smith was elected in 1885 with the Liberals and in 1886 was re-elected with the Liberal Unionists,<sup>5</sup> obviously following the defenders of the union of Britain and Ireland and dissenting from W.E. Gladstone. Roandeu Albert Henry was

3. A native of Syria, he was brought as a slave to Italy and, by his wit and talent, won the favour of his master who freed and educated him. His mimes, which he acted himself, enjoyed great success in the provincial towns of Italy and at the games given by Caesar in 46 BC. Publilius (less correctly Publius) was perhaps even more famous as an *improvisatore*, and received from Caesar himself the prize in a contest where he vanquished all his competitors, including the celebrated Decimus Laberius.

4. In the course of time the collection was interpolated with sentences drawn from other writers, including many pithy sayings like 'Pecunia una regimen est rerum omnium'. Each maxim is composed in a single verse and the verses are arranged in alphabetical order according to their initial letters. The best texts of the *Sentences* are those of E. Wolflin (1869), A. Spengel (1874) and W. Meyer (1880), with complete critical apparatus and index verborum; recent editions with notes by O. Friedrich (1880), Bickford-Smith (1895), see also Edward Bensly, 'Authors of quotations wanted', in Bickford-Smith 1908, 229.

5. Craig 1974, 243.

admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1878, where he read Law, graduating in 1883 and taking his Masters of Arts in 1886.<sup>6</sup> He became a member of the Inner Temple in 1882 and was called to the bar in 1886.<sup>7</sup> According to the Inner Temple archives, his professional address in 1889 and 1891 was 1 Elm Court, an upper middle class neighbourhood of London.<sup>8</sup> In 1891, he married Caroline Louise Marianne Skinner (1873–1936), and three children followed, John Allan, William Nugent Venning, Aubrey Luis.

Bickford is a name of ancient Anglo-Saxon origin (becca and ford = a type of axe and a shallow place in a river) and is encountered as a toponym in several places in England. It is first found in Devonshire in a maritime region in the southwest of the county, not far from Cornwall where Trevarno, Bickford-Smith's birthplace, is located. Trevarno is an important manor and garden dating back to 1296. The estate of c.750 acres was bought in 1874 by R.A.H. Bickford-Smith's father and remained in the family until 1994.<sup>9</sup>

Following searches in various directions — local archives and internet sites — information was found associating R.A.H. Bickford-Smith with a prominent figure in nineteenth-century British technological innovation related to the industrial revolution. The person in question is William Bickford (1774–1834), a native of Cornwall who was a leather seller by trade and an inventor. He had combined gunpowder and flax yarn into a reliable slow-burning fuse, which he patented in 1831 as the 'Safety Rod', to be changed later to the 'Safety Fuze'. After his death, his factory, producing fuse by the mile, became *Bickford-Smith & Co*. The company underwent many changes of name and was registered as a limited liability company in 1888 when it became Bickford, Smith and Co. Ltd. Safety fuse continued to be made there with numerous changes and alterations until 1961. This company was the big-

6. In his time the Master of Trinity College was an enlightened scholar of classics, William Hepworth Thompson (1866–86). His tutor was the mathematician J.M. Image, in line with Trinity's great tradition in Mathematics (Isaac Newton).

7. Venn 1940, pt II, vol. I, 257.

8. See Booth Poverty Map (1898–99) (Charles Booth Online Archive) <http://booth.lse.ac.uk>.

9. Ellory-Pett 1998, 72–3.

gest British manufacturer of safety fuses and was taken over by Nobel Industries in 1921 and closed in 1962. A tin tablet set into the wall of the works commemorates William Bickford's invention.<sup>10</sup> This important invention was initially motivated by the local tin-mining industry, which was plagued by many accidents at the time, due to the intensification of extraction and inadequate safety measures.

William Bickford-Smith was the inventor's grandson through his mother's line, and the one who bore both surnames of his parents, George Smith and Elizabeth Burrall Bickford. R.A.H. Bickford-Smith, therefore, is closely related to the innovative tradition emerging from the British industrial revolution. Furthermore, strong links with the Cornish mining industry and British political life appear through his family history. There is no doubt that a network of personal acquaintances from relevant circles would be important in his life. It is not unrelated that two chapters of *Greece under King George* had been published in England a year earlier, in a leading radical newspaper, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.<sup>11</sup> The newspaper was owned by Joseph Cowen (1831–1900), politician, journalist and mine owner of Newcastle-on-Tyne, son of a liberal MP. Through his publications he vigorously advocated reform of the mine industry in the colliery villages in his area and was well known for his ardent concern for the welfare of the miners. Joseph Cowen came from a background similar to that of Bickford-Smith, and could have very well been acquainted with him through common social and political circles.<sup>12</sup>

For Britain, the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were marked by a major territorial expansion. British imperialism and colonial expansion were at their peak with serious economic, social and cultural transformations taking place in the country and the colonies. A devotion to the idea of progress had been encouraged by a most important figure in Victorian Britain, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), who had a profound impact on certain circles. Bickford-Smith was driven

by the same restlessness that drove many young Victorian men and women of rank and wealth to the ends of earth, like Rolling Stones. They escaped from the dull ease and elaborate conventions of rigid 19<sup>th</sup> century society to the exciting and challenging simplicities of travel, exploration and mountaineering, in remote and primitive places. An example was the Irishman John Palliser, a brilliant amateur geographer and adventurer fascinated by the Great Plains who persuaded the Royal Geographical Society to back his exploration of Western Canada (1857–59).<sup>13</sup> The Palliser expedition was financed by the Colonial Office, which was interested in all British inroads in North America. John Palliser, his brothers and friends succumbed to the fever of expedition. They were ardent sportsmen, wrote diaries and memoirs, spoke languages and adopted a literary style. A good number of these young men who did not head for tours of 'imaginative geography'<sup>14</sup> as narrated in books or described in letters, choose instead the Grand Tour and its variations. This was a travel route that provided education and entertainment and, to a lesser degree, conquest and domestication of the wild. The Grand Tour was popular among British upper-class young men, serving as an educational rite of passage for wealthy university graduates. Its primary value lay in the exposure to the cultural artifacts of Antiquity and the Renaissance, as well as to the aristocratic and fashionable society of the European Continent. Its length varied from several months to several years. Parallel to, and sometimes as an extension of, the European tour to Italy, these travels led to Constantinople, the great international capital of the East. The impressions and opinions formed in the course of these travels of the Balkans, the East and the Levant, were recorded in personal writings (diaries, memoirs), as well as in books and European newspaper articles. Newspaper stories in particular reached a large public, because they were short and had a wide circulation.

In April 1890, R.A.H. Bickford-Smith came to Greece for 'archaeological travelling' and the British School at Athens became his natural point of reference and residence. At that time, British archaeological inter-

10. For William Bickford see <http://www.devonlife.co.uk>, <http://www.themagicofcornwall.com> and <http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk/status/status.htm>.

11. Bickford-Smith 1893, xx.

12. [http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Joseph\\_Cowen](http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Joseph_Cowen)

13. Foran 1982, 35.

14. Chard 1999, 10.



ests were focused on the Peloponnese. James Frazer had completed an extensive tour in Greece whilst preparing his edition of Pausanias.<sup>15</sup> Excavations in Megalopolis were at their peak, with G.C. Richards, W.J. Woodhouse, W. Loring believing that they had discovered there the first fairly complete ‘proscenium’ (stage) of the ‘Greek period’. So it is most likely that Bickford-Smith was inspired by the fervour of his countrymen and visited the newly discovered archaeological site of Megalopolis. One of the urgent demands of the School’s Managing Committee that year was to secure grants for sustaining the promising British institution in Greece. They referred to the advantage of finding in Athens a good library and guidance of competent scholars. If only by endowment or by annual subscription a permanent income of 600 or 700 pounds a year could be assured, no one need doubt that the British School at Athens would amply justify its foundation.<sup>16</sup>

Bickford-Smith ‘Esquire’ was supporting the British School at Athens with his 1 pound and 1 shilling annual subscription up until 1893, in which year he probably ceased to reside there. Besides the contributions of other individual subscribers, the BSA received donations from the Society of Antiquaries and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies.<sup>17</sup> Not all the students who came to the BSA as holders of travelling fellowships at any university in the UK or the colonies or as travelling students of the Royal Academy or other similar bodies became annual subscribers.<sup>18</sup> Becoming a subscriber implied a sufficient personal income as well as a strong interest in the School’s objectives: ‘the promotion of classical studies and every period of the Greek language and literature, from the earliest age to the present day’.<sup>19</sup>

It is obvious that the BSA was trying to establish itself in Greece, somewhat delayed in relation to the

existing foreign schools in Athens: the French, the German and the American. In its early stages, it followed the example of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, founded in 1880. The inspiration of the Hellenic Society of London was ‘to advance the study of Greek language, literature, and art, and to illustrate the history of the Greek race in the ancient, Byzantine and Neo-Hellenic periods by the publication of memoirs and unedited documents or monuments’. According to one of the leading classicists of the Victorian era, R.C. Jebb, Professor of Greek at Glasgow and later Cambridge, these objectives would be promoted in the most direct and effective manner ‘by the creation of a permanent agency at a central point of the Hellenic countries’, as he wrote in 1883.<sup>20</sup> Ideological support for the establishment and expansion of the BSA was not difficult to find among British scholars of classical studies and restless young Victorians. However, finding financial support for the whole project was the most difficult task for the Managing Committee of the early years. Since the financial position of the School was very precarious, depending solely on a limited number of grants and subscriptions, many of those who wished to take part in the project had to support themselves, or find their own means of support. A close set of British scholars supported the School, made their acquaintances in the emerging Greek social scene, studied and wrote extensively about ancient Greece and ‘the continuity of Greek life’.

Following the travelling habits of his countrymen, Bickford-Smith, a young barrister in his early thirties, chose the route to Constantinople and, on his way to the imperial capital, decided to stop over in Greece. The story of his decision, prompted by the captain of the ship on which he was sailing, is charming and one of the few really spontaneous and original experiences that Bickford-Smith relates in *Greece under King George*.<sup>21</sup> Everyone reading his lines is aware of a strong and motivated control of feelings:

But as a personal experience, it was of some value in backing up my already-made determination to beware of sentiment... At any

15. For Frazer’s project on Pausanias see Henderson 2001, 213.

16. BSA AR 1889–90, 7–17.

17. Pandelis Ralli, from the London Ralli Bros was one of the trustees of the BSA and actually visited the School during that time, BSA AR 1891–92, 15.

18. Of the eighteen students of the period 1886–90 only Bickford-Smith and David Hogarth, Fellow and Tutor of Magdalen College Oxford, were subscribers to the BSA according to the lists of 1892–93, BSA AR 1893, 23.

19. See objectives in ‘Rules and Regulations of the British School at Athens’, published in all BSA Annual Reports of the period.

20. Jebb 1883, 3–4.

21. Bickford-Smith 1893, ix–x.

rate, I made up my mind to observe facts, and each day I found some new items which seemed worthy to be added to the stock from which I might eventually evolve an opinion.<sup>22</sup>

We are in the realm of the ‘Empire of Fact’ and, as Peter Gay has pointed out, ‘the industrial revolution was a revolution in knowledge that the Victorian century would master more completely and would need more urgently than any of its predecessors.’<sup>23</sup> This knowledge was based on facts generated by modern sciences that influenced a large number of British scholars.

Facts apart, there is little doubt that Bickford-Smith was swept off his feet by the sentiments he experienced during his three-year stay in Athens. This is not expressed explicitly anywhere, but it is implicit in his writings about modern Greece and the Greeks. He liked everything, he justified everything and he praised everything: he saw the cheating habits in everyday dealings as integrally linked to more appealing characteristics. Greek students with their lively participation in their tutorial courses were compared to the ‘listless air’ prevalent in British schools. The Greeks were deemed more polite than the French. Even the fact that one might be invaded in his bedroom by a whole Greek family was justified by the fact that the English wear ‘such very funny clothes’. Greeks were ‘fully alive to the Epikurean pleasure’, but never got drunk. A series of incidents narrated in the introduction of his book reveals strong positive sentiments for modern Greece, sentiments that Bickford-Smith wanted to share with his countrymen back in England. The main aim of his book was to enlighten his countrymen, in the hope that they would favour ‘the Hellenic factor in the Eastern Question’. His vision of assigning Constantinople to Greece as the natural successor of Turkey, after the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, confirms his vigorous support of panhellenism;<sup>24</sup> a scheme inspired by classical times, with the aspiration of uniting all Greeks in one political body and which in modern times acquired the visionary aspect

of a *Megali Idea*. Panhellenism was one of the polymorphous poly-ideologies that were born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, like panslavism and pan-Turkism, expressing a nationalistic interest in the unity of an ethnic group; a movement of irredentism characterized by cultural and political trends.

Bickford-Smith became a follower of panhellenism, praised modern life and progress in Greece in the time of King George I, and made a plea for the Greek cause. Bickford-Smith’s sojourn in Greece coincided with a strengthening of the liberal parliamentary regime and conspicuous economic development.<sup>25</sup> However, we know that the Greek economy had entered a phase of successive crises, the most serious being the financial crisis of 1893 and the collapse of the currant trade. There is evidence that Bickford-Smith was aware of the critical situation of Greek public finances. The dedication of his book to Charilaos Trikoupis (Χαρίλαω Τρικούπη τιμής ένεκα) denotes Bickford-Smith’s appreciation of the anglophile Greek politician, who was probably a personal acquaintance.

Bickford-Smith’s cultural and educational background informs the way he structures his book. As an observant barrister he declares his sources and lays out his chapters in a way more or less analogous to that of other descriptive essays: the population, the natural resources, industry and commerce, entrepreneurial activities, communications, public finances, public order, education, culture, archaeology, religion, the army, the constitution, politics, society, charity, miscellaneous, Panhellenism. The political strife between Trikoupis and Deliyiannis was a major topic during Bickford-Smith’s time in Greece. However, he was ill-prepared to understand the structure of modern Athenian society and its relation to Greek politics. Old families were socializing with heroes from the Greek Revolution of 1821, as well as with diaspora Greek entrepreneurs and politicians.<sup>26</sup> Social mobility on a large scale was abolishing notions of class structure such as would have been familiar to a Victorian man. Still, it seems that Bickford-Smith thought that

22. Bickford-Smith 1893, xi.

23. Gay 1993, 447.

24. Bickford-Smith 1893, ix–xviii.

25. For an overview of the reign of King George I, see Carabott 1997.

26. Bickford-Smith 1893, 285–94.

the presentation of Greek politics and society to the English newspaper-reading public would be of major interest.

Why did Bickford-Smith write a book about Greece, a relatively new, foreign state? One reason was the fact that this new state represented continuity with Greek antiquity. His own presence in Greece, the BSA milieu and his Greek acquaintances were other reasons, which enabled him to express a political view of the Eastern Question in its geopolitical dimension. But it is difficult to ascertain his ideological equipment for confronting this subject. Bickford-Smith learnt Greek and had compiled a handwritten, and hitherto unpublished, Greek-French ‘vocabulary’.<sup>27</sup> We know that some of his books and papers somehow ended up in the library of King’s College London (Anglo-Hellenic League fund). They include his Greek-French vocabulary, cuttings from English newspapers concerning the situation in Greece in 1877, 1878, etc., C. Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (1824–25), J. Sibthorp, *Flora Graecae prodromus* (1806) — personal readings indicating that Bickford-Smith was following the history of modern Greece from the time he was at Trinity, when the Treaty of Berlin was concluded (1878).

Bickford-Smith’s aim in writing *Greece under King George* was to inform enlightened tourists who wanted a deeper insight into and understanding of modern Greece than that offered by Baedeker’s *Handbook for Travellers*.<sup>28</sup> His intention was not to compile an original scientific work, for he was well aware that he was an amateur in archaeology and history. His suggestion that the prospective traveller to Greece should bring with him photographic apparatus, so as to be able to take away a comprehensive set of images of the country, is interesting.<sup>29</sup> A good sense of taxonomy, an invaluable resource for a Victorian barrister and traveller, is evident from the way he deploys his second-hand sources and personal interpretations about late 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece. He presents demographic data, catalogues

of plants, data of agricultural production, catalogues of professions, public revenues and expenses, imports and exports, lists of industries accompanied by their horsepower; series of numerical data that shed light on modern Greece’s progress in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

In *Greece under King George* one can detect the author’s political ideas, his engagement in favour of Greek irredentism. It has been argued that there was more than one concept of patriotism in Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in connection to growing national consciousness.<sup>30</sup> Bickford-Smith contrasts modern Greek patriotism with the British Victorian concept:

I noticed that whereas in England patriotism was not generally looked on as a virtue of quite the front rank, and was, indeed, treated rather as a vice by our most advanced school as well as by the little band of millennial cosmopolitanists, while in one part of the United Kingdom the accentuation of the word differed, here in Greece the idea embraced in the word was the staple of conversation and the master-soul of all politics.<sup>31</sup>

Here Bickford-Smith attacks cosmopolitanism as a major factor in undermining patriotism in late Victorian Britain.

Recent historiography has placed Bickford-Smith among the first historiographers of modern Greece to whom the term *philhellene* properly applies. These philhellenes had come to study modern Greece via the classics and most of them were interested in contemporary Greece mainly because they hoped to find in its customs and mores surviving traces of the classical past. This was an approach that found confirmation in the ‘survivals’ theory popularized by 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists and folklorists. Travellers and amateur scholars of classical Greece wandered through the Greek countryside, searching for the remnants of classical tradition.<sup>32</sup> *Greece under King George* has been characterized as ‘a mine of information on the

27. I consulted the Bickford-Smith Vocabulary at the Archives of KCL. A detailed publication of the document is planned.

28. Baedeker 1889.

29. Bickford-Smith 1893, 316. A French companion book is also cited, here identified as S. Reinach (1858–1932), *Conseils aux voyageurs archéologiques en Grèce et dans l’orient hellénique*, Paris 1889.

30. Varouxakis 2002, 21–2 quoting Julia Stapleton’s views on the subject.

31. Bickford-Smith 1893, xiv.

32. Fleming 2001.

kingdom of Greece in the last decade of the nineteenth century that retains its value to the present day'.<sup>33</sup> This assessment was valid for several decades, for want of empirical evidence. Bickford-Smith's numbers on Greek industry were used and reproduced by Greek economic historians of the interwar period up to the recent decades without much question as to the identity of the author and his intentions.<sup>34</sup>

Three years after his first publication, Bickford-Smith published his second book, the annotated edition of Publilius Syrus, the collection of *Sentences* already mentioned. After his return to England, Bickford-Smith handed in his manuscript for printing, in early 1894. He did not search for new manuscripts and although he had consulted nearly a hundred editions of Publilius Syrus he defined his work as 'the attempt of an amateur'. The main goal of his initiative was taxonomy:

the only merit I might lay claim to, if comparison must be made with these Teutonic giants [previous German editors], is that of giving a rather more orderly account of the manuscripts and editions. The collecting of information on these heads has been a most delightful recreation.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, we must not forget that Latin sentences with pithy meaning were widely used in prose and writings, especially in eloquent speeches of entertainment, or professional use. The other reason for editing Publilius Syrus was to lessen the Latin dominance,

in giving English surroundings to Publilius... In this I have been guided mainly by the prevailing custom in this country and further by the hope that some will be tempted to gain an introduction to my author who might have been frightened away by the Latin setting.<sup>36</sup>

In 1898, Bickford-Smith published his last book, *Cretan Sketches*, a year after the Cretan uprising of 1897, led by Manousos Koundouros, himself a jurist. Bickford-Smith had long before declared that he would prefer to be 'a returned tourist' rather than 'an unreturned candidate for Parliament'.<sup>37</sup> It is most probable that he visited Crete in his status of 'Late Commissioner of the Cretan Relief Committee', during or soon after the insurrection. In this book Bickford-Smith quotes some of the insurgent leaders and several residents there, implying strong personal acquaintances in Crete, where he most probably compiled his Greek-French vocabulary since the French language was much more widespread.<sup>38</sup> As expounded in the brief preface, the aim of publishing *Cretan Sketches* 'is merely to enable the newspaper-reader to fill in the gaps in his mental panorama of Cretan struggles by a few rough etchings mostly taken from life'.<sup>39</sup> The fact is that Bickford-Smith fails all expectations to give an original view of Crete or the Cretan struggle. Crete is dealt with in much the same way as Palliser dealt with western Canada, as a remote place full of natural beauties and peculiarities, with a valued local history and tradition. Among the oddest impressions from the island are those recorded under the title 'The terrible undead', where the savageness of the Sfakia region is revealed:

The Society for Psychical Research ought to send a committee of investigation to the region of the White Mountains... But their country is the home of the vampire, and the vampire is the most interesting and blood-thirsty of all spooks... His habits are well known; the only oath that binds him is by his winding-sheet; articles arranged cross-wise disconcert him; he amuses himself by rolling stones down a cliff; human liver is the dainty he is keenest on; he has a whole holiday on Saturdays.<sup>40</sup>

Casual scenes from everyday life in Crete are intermingled with historical and scientific information.

33. Clogg 2000, 20.

34. His main sources on the Greek economy are Lewis Sergeant, *New Greece*, London 1878; Πανελλήνιος Σύγγραφος; Joseph D. Beckman, *Les finances de la Grèce, Etude composée sur la base de documents authentiques*, Athens 1892; Bickford-Smith 1893, xix. Agriantoni 1990.

35. Bickford-Smith 1895, viii, Preface, written at The Cottage Blackwell, in February 1894.

36. Bickford-Smith 1895, viii.

37. Bickford-Smith 1893, xviii.

38. Bickford-Smith 1898, 79.

39. Bickford-Smith 1898; the preface was written at 98 Palace Gardens Terrace, 17 November 1897.

40. Bickford-Smith 1898, 52–3.



Nonetheless, Bickford-Smith remains faithful to his linguistic researches and, under the poetic title 'A legacy of words', publishes a list of words from the Cretan dialect translated into English.<sup>41</sup>

Three factors help to elucidate Bickford-Smith's partiality for Greece: sentimental predilection, national trade interests and politics. Bickford-Smith's panhellenism might be related to the 'survivals' theory of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, it is evident that his political views were shaped after the Treaty of Berlin and the weakening of the Turkish presence in Europe, followed by the growth of the power of Russia. His anti-Turkish sentiments and his sympathies for Greek irredentism were accompanied by political views of British origin. Bickford-Smith's strong sentiments for his own country can be found throughout his books, and the slogan 'Rule Britannia' actually appears as a chapter subtitle in *Cretan Sketches*.<sup>42</sup> The view that a strong and independent Greece would be a good trade partner for England is expressed openly in *Greece under King George*. He presumed that Britain and the Triple Alliance could become better clients for Greece than France and Russia. Still, his main concern was strengthening the British presence in Greece, to the point of proposing specific governmental measures, such as the abolition of British import taxes on Greek currants and silk; the financing of the British School at Athens so as to boost the prestige of Britain in the Greek capital; the implementation of British-Greek diplomatic friendship in Athens; a British naval presence at Piraeus, and a Greek-English royal marriage. As he saw it, these apparently dissimilar measures should be accompanied by a personal dedication to that cause, which could be realised by publicly declaring philhellenic views and by purchasing Greek products.<sup>43</sup> British dominance in Greek foreign trade had been unquestioned in previous decades, based mainly on the export of currants from Patras. British manufacturers from the north west of England were impatiently waiting for their products to be consumed also in Greek cities. However, other trading partners were endeavouring to strengthen their

presence in Greek economic life such as Russia and Austria-Hungary, as well as Turkey, which had always been present.

At the end of *Greece under King George* Bickford-Smith mentions his intellectual predecessors, who stimulated his commitment to this small nation, Greece. The first was George Wheler,<sup>44</sup> the English traveller who accompanied Dr Jacob Spon to Greece in 1675–76, and was especially interested in botany and topography. His publication remained the standard English book on Greece for many years. The second source of inspiration was Lord Byron, who introduced Greece to the broad public of the middle classes.<sup>45</sup> Wheler's book offered information and a taxonomic approach to Greece in the geography of the eastern Mediterranean, while Byron's romantic writings evoked strong feelings for the Greek cause in the long run. Besides these acknowledged sources of inspiration Macaulay is, in my opinion, an archetype who profoundly influenced Victorian scholars and who was not mentioned by Bickford-Smith as he was a near contemporary.

Macaulay was educated at the University of Cambridge; he was called to the bar in 1826, though he practised little, preferring to follow his extensive literary pursuits and politics. His residence in India set its seal on his cultural and professional ideal. In 1842, he finalized his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, a collection of poems in ballad form, retelling legends of the beginnings of the Roman Republic. Three volumes of his *Essays* were published in 1843. His ongoing major historical work was envisaged to become eventually a comprehensive history of England from the accession of King James II to 1832, the year of the Parliamentary Reform Act. The first two volumes of the *History of England from the Accession of James II* were published in December 1848 and were at once a huge success, running through numerous editions in both Britain and the United States. His work contributed substantially to the development of social history, by presenting an extensive survey of English society in

41. Bickford-Smith 1898, 154–8.

42. Bickford-Smith 1898, 88.

43. Bickford-Smith 1893, 341–5.

44. Wheler 1682.

45. Bickford-Smith 1893, 320. On Byron's influence on travel writing see Dritsas 2006.





Fig.4.2: From this photograph, which is captioned 'Photographers on Delos', it would appear that Bickford Smith's advice was taken by later travelers; BSA Photographic Archive: Members, Schoolmasters' Trip 1910–12, M. Scott, Islands–1.

the year 1685, in terms of such topics as population, cities, classes and tastes. Macaulay's masterwork was an unprecedented best-seller. His approach was that of a positive promoter of 'progress' and his *History of England*, with its wealth of material, its use of vivid details, and its rhetorical, narrative style combined to make it one of the most popular literary works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Macaulay, a barrister with — like Bickford-Smith — a Trinity college Cambridge education, and a preference for Roman literature and the history of his own country, offered a multifaceted cultural model that was dedicated to **progress and was much followed in Victorian Britain**. Macaulay and the Anglicists promoted English language and culture throughout the continent and the colonies.<sup>46</sup> Roman literature and history were

particularly appreciated by jurists and politicians of the time. Accumulating information and data, discovering and narrating the history of a country were also part of the British travelling tradition. All these factors were helpful to travellers who ventured beyond the continent, enabling them to appropriate new countries. The life and career of Roandeu Albert Henry Bickford-Smith evolved on a Victorian pattern that could be delineated in Britain, or any other destination of similar restless Victorians. Their writings reflect the adaptations of these patterns to different surroundings and circumstances.

During the turbulent years of World War I, Bickford-Smith died in 1916, at the age of 57. His death was announced in *The Annual of the British School at*

46. Lawson 1998, 149–53.

*Athens*<sup>47</sup>, but no obituary was published in *The Times* or the *Telegraph*, an expected after death remembrance and praise. In the waning years of the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bickford-Smith with his written anxieties signalled the type of a Victorian bourgeois traveller. He combined in his travellings to Greece political and literary pursuits with personal freedom and independence from work and social restrictions. Visual impressions from travelling would not be expressed only in historical accounts and sketches. A new ground to express feelings and impressions was opened up in his time, that of photography: ‘They have eyes but they see not and is meant even more for the ambitious traveller, whether specialist or encyclopaedist. He is especially strong on the advantages of photography, and in these Kodak days neither the luggage nuisance nor the expense need frighten anyone out of taking a little trouble, which will be more than compensated by the possession of such mementoes in after years.’<sup>48</sup> Who knows, maybe in the near future someone might come across a photographic album of Bickford-Smith, mementos from his travels in Greece.

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47. BSA XXII, 217; see also obituary in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 21/12/1916.

48. Bickford-Smith 1893, 316.

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