

Chapter 8

Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange between Scholars in Britain and the Empire, 1830–1914

Heather Ellis

In recent years there has been growing interest among historians in conceptualizing the British Empire as a space of knowledge production and circulation (Jöns, 2008; Pietsch, 2010, 2011). It has become clear that over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century connections between scholars attached to British universities and those based in the wider Empire, as well as between universities themselves, increased significantly in number and complexity. These connections took a variety of forms, from the migration of students and scholars, including both individuals working within the bureaucratic structures of Empire and those outside them, to the exchange of publications and correspondence. Indeed, historians have felt able to speak of the existence of a *British academic world*, consisting chiefly of the British Isles and the settler colonies of Canada, Australia, and South Africa (Pietsch, 2011).

Instead of attempting to identify the various scholarly networks existing within the British Empire, I seek rather to analyze the impact the experience of traveling these networks and collaborating with colleagues from other parts of the Empire had upon the identities of British scholars in the period between 1830 and 1914. Historians who have examined the interaction of British scholars with the Empire have tended to focus on the important task of tracing the specific networks they constructed and proving their existence. Questions of meaning and identity have as a result received considerably less attention. Following the work of Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (2003), among others, historians continue to assume that scholarly cooperation between individuals and institutions within the Empire had the effect (and often also the aim) of strengthening imperial ties and promoting an overarching imperial loyalty (Pietsch, 2010). This assumption has been particularly noticeable when referring to the fields of geography (Hudson, 1977; Kearns, 1997),

H. Ellis (✉)

School of Education, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK

e-mail: h.l.ellis@sheffield.ac.uk

© The Author(s) 2017

H. Jöns et al. (eds.), *Mobilities of Knowledge*, Knowledge and Space 10,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-44654-7_8

141

ethnology (Anderson, 1992; Brown, 1993), and anthropology (Feuchtwang, 1973; Francis, 1994; Kuklick & Jones, 1978; Morrison, 1984). The tendency to assume a close link between participation in imperial networks and a sense of loyalty to the idea of empire seems, in turn, to be related to another tendency within the historiography of higher education institutions in Britain (and arguably across the world), namely to assume a close relationship between the flourishing of universities and the growth of the nation state and nationalism (Craig, 1984; Jarausch, 1983; Välimaa, 2004). If one considers how frequently imperialism is treated as being closely related to nationalist sentiment, it comes as little surprise that many historians have assumed that Oxford and Cambridge (as well as the Scottish and provincial English universities to a lesser extent) promoted the idea of empire (Symonds, 1991). They are likewise often perceived to have been enthusiastic supporters of nationalist identities over the course of the nineteenth century (Anderson, 2004, p. 149; Anderson, 2006, p. 47).

As a consequence of this tendency, relatively few historians have questioned the assumption that a majority of university scholars would be in favor of empire and identify with the imperial project (notable exceptions are Stuchtey, 1999, pp. 149–171; Symonds, 1991, pp. 80–98). Indeed, Joseph Hodge (2007, p. xxi) refers to the widespread view that by the late nineteenth century, science and technology came to be seen as “indispensable ‘tools of empire’.” In recent years, historians have become increasingly interested in exploring the limitations and constraints of Western imperial power, and, in particular, the conflicted and often contradictory role of science and scientific scholars within it. Thus, Hodge’s (2007) study, *Triumph of the Expert*, for example, emphasizes science’s role in revealing the “enigmatic and fractured nature of Western imperialism” and the “tensions and conflicts within colonial policy and the colonial state.” (Hodge, 2007, p. xx). In a similar way, Helen Tilley’s work on Britain’s Empire in Africa, in particular, the African Survey of 1929–1938, highlights the important role of scientists in developing critiques of imperial policy (Tilley, 2011).

What will be introduced here in this chapter is a distinction between imperial networks and the space of Empire, on the one hand, and the meanings and identities associated with them, on the other. Conceiving of the Empire purely in spatial terms (as David Lambert and Alan Lester [2006] have done in their study of imperial “careering” in the long nineteenth century) decouples it from an automatic association with imperial sentiment and allows the possibility that many different motivations drove those individuals who traveled within its borders and made use of its networks. Lambert and Lester highlight “the complexity, varied scale, constitutions and compositions of personal imperial spaces and networks” (Butlin, 2009, p. 5). If this can be said of those who were directly connected with imperial institutions such as the colonial civil service, then how much more must it apply to scholars working for universities connected only indirectly with the imperial project?

Another advantage of conceptualizing the Empire in spatial terms, rather than simply as idea or ideology, is that it encourages us to treat it in a comparative light, alongside other spatial frames of reference such as the local, the regional, the national, and the global, which also helped to shape people’s experiences and identi-

ties at the time. As Frederick Cooper (2005) has written, “the spatial imagination of intellectuals . . . from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century was . . . varied. It was neither global nor local, but was built out of specific lines of connection and posited regional, continental and transnational affinities” (p. 109). In other words, the challenge is to ask how important (relative to other spatial frames) the Empire was to those who traversed its networks, and under what specific conditions it emerged as especially relevant. Here, we should heed the call of Robin Butlin (2009) to pay more attention to “the dynamics and spatial scales of cultural circuits” (p. 41) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Motivations Driving Scholarly Networking Within the British Empire

In the next section I consider the variety of motivations that drove scholars attached to universities in Britain to travel across the Empire and engage in a range of collaborative projects with colleagues working in the colonies. There is no doubt that a desire to deepen imperial ties and promote imperial unity lay behind the actions of certain scholars. One well-known example would be Sir Bartle Edward Frere, who rose through the ranks of the Indian Civil Service to become Governor of Bombay in 1862. As well as his career in the Indian Civil Service, he was active in linguistic, geographical, and historical scholarship of the peoples of India and held a number of academic appointments, most importantly as chancellor of the University of Bombay, also from 1862. In addition, he was elected president of the Royal Asiatic Society on three occasions, a fellow of the Royal Society and president of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in 1873–1874. For Frere, geographical study of the Empire was inseparable from a desire to promote the imperial project and, in his own words, replenish “the vital springs of national life” (Benyon, 2004).

However, by no means all scholars shared this view. It is possible to find many academics who traveled widely in the British Empire and collaborated with a range of colleagues at colonial universities, for whom the Empire itself and the furtherance of its interests were not of prime importance. Such individuals have not, however, received the attention they deserve. Historians continue to argue that in many cases science and scientific interests have been used as an excuse to conceal rampant imperial ambitions. Marxist historians like Brian Hudson (1977) have, for example, interpreted the relationship between the *new scientific geography* and the *new imperialism* in the 1880s and 1890s in this light. There are certainly instances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries where this was undoubtedly the case. The most famous example is probably the so-called Geographical Conference organized by King Leopold II of Belgium at Brussels in 1876. Superficially, it was supposed to consider the humanitarian needs of the populace of central Africa and ways of advancing scientific research and was attended by scholars from an impressive range of countries including Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. Initial discussions considered the possibility of establishing

collaborative scientific stations and founding an “International African Association.” However, the work of the conference soon came to an end when it became clear that the main motivation behind the initiative had been Leopold’s imperial ambitions in the Congo (Wesseling, 1996). As Wesseling (1996) has written, “very few were fooled by the word ‘international’” (p. 89).

In recent years, however, scholars have become more sensitive to the multiple motivations driving those actors moving within the sphere of empire. Key to this, as Helen Tilley has pointed out, is recognizing empire as one of a number of overlapping and interlocking spaces through and in which individuals traveled, which should not be reduced in importance or overlooked in discussions of the national-international dichotomy that continues to dominate the historiography (Tilley, 2011, p. 9). In particular, there have been calls for a more nuanced understanding of the figure of the explorer, who has often been viewed as a *tool* of empire. As Felix Driver (2001) has argued, “the idea of exploration was freighted with multiple and contested meanings, associated variously with science, literature, religion, commerce and empire” (p. 2). In his work on the imperial fashioning of Vancouver Island, Daniel Clayton (2000, pp. 8–9) has likewise identified a variety of motivations driving explorers, including humanitarian sentiments and a scientific and philosophical agenda.

When examining the lives and trajectories of individual scholars, the relative importance of imperial identity and the imperial project vis-à-vis the interests of their particular discipline must of course be thought of in terms of a sliding scale. For many such scholars, the relationship must be visualized in terms of a partnership, with the interests both of the individual disciplines and of the Empire being served. Representative here might be the career of Roderick Impey Murchison; a military man by training, he nonetheless went on to serve as director-general of the Geological Survey from 1855 and president of the Royal Geographical Society from 1843 until 1871. Personally, he was an imperialist who wanted to deepen imperial ties; however, at the same time, his involvement with the Geological Survey saw university-trained geologists sent out to nearly every colony of the Empire, an endeavor that in turn produced an unprecedentedly detailed picture of colonial geology. Indeed, T. G. Bonney has written of “the mutually beneficial bargain . . . struck by Murchison” in which “science helped take an inventory of, develop, and justify the empire, while the empire offered science access to invaluable overseas data” (Bonney, 2004, para 8.)

It may be possible to place the figure of Halford Mackinder in this category also. Traditionally, scholars have tended to interpret the career of the first reader in geography at the University of Oxford and father of the *new geography* as a classic example of an academic serving the interests of empire (Kearns, 1997; Ryan, 1994). Mackinder, however, denied this late in life, declaring that the interests of geography as a science had always been uppermost in his mind. At the very least, equal weight ought to be given to his academic interests in assessing his career. “In truth,” Brian W. Blouet (2004) has written, “his political and geographic aims were inseparable; he wanted to create a new scientific geography which could be pressed into the service of imperialism” (para. 23).

There were other scholars such as John Holland Rose, appointed reader in modern history at the University of Cambridge in 1911, who, although interested in and enthusiastic about the Empire, pursued work in a wide range of research areas. Thus, on the one hand, Rose joined together with A. P. Newton and E. A. Benians to edit successive volumes of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1925–1936) and founded the Rose Studentship for Imperial History in 1932; however, in the main, his research focused on the history of continental Europe from 1780 to the present day, with a particular interest in the life and career of Napoleon. Like many of his contemporaries, Rose had huge respect for the achievements of German historians and worked hard to promote friendship and collaboration between the scholarly communities in Germany and Britain on the eve of World War I. In addition to winning a high reputation within Britain and the Empire, he received honorary degrees from extra-imperial universities in America and Poland (Otte, 2004).

There were, however, many scholars who made use of imperial networks in the late nineteenth century with little or no concern for the imperial project. A good early example of such a career is that of the astronomer, Sir John Herschel. Educated at Cambridge and elected to a fellowship at St John's College in 1813, Herschel engaged in a wide range of collaborations with scholars in the Empire in order to further his astronomical research. Thus, in 1833 he traveled to the Cape of Good Hope so that he could view from the southern heavens stars he had already observed in England. In this task, he was to work closely with the London-trained doctor, Thomas Maclear, who had been appointed director of Britain's Royal Observatory at the Cape. He was likewise assisted by the Australian-born astronomer James Dunlop and his catalogue of nebulae he had observed from Parramatta in New South Wales. During his stay at the Cape, Herschel served as president of the South African Literary Association and Scientific Institution and corresponded from there with several leading British scientists, in particular Charles Lyell, professor of Geology at King's College, London. Herschel's research enjoyed worldwide renown, several of his works being translated into Chinese and Japanese (Crowe, 2004).

Many other similar cases could be mentioned such as the entomologist, William Sharp Macleay, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. In terms of his academic contacts, he was deeply embedded in the world of continental European science, corresponding at length with German and French natural philosophers on various topics of physiological entomology. He was likewise in regular contact with American entomologists and was elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia. However, at the same time, he made extensive use of British imperial networks to pursue his scientific researches. One of his most successful studies, *Annulosa Javanica* (which was published in 1825) comprised a systematic description of insects collected in Java between 1812 and 1817 by Thomas Horsfield under the auspices of the East India Company and Sir Stamford Raffles. Once again, in 1838, he published illustrations of various insects collected in South Africa between 1834 and 1836 during an expedition under the direction of Andrew Smith that had been funded by the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Central Africa (Boulger, 2004).

Those working within the emerging disciplines of archaeology and anthropology were particularly astute at using the networks provided by the British Empire to further the interests of their own studies. Take, for example, John Garstang, honorary reader in Egyptian archaeology at the University of Liverpool from 1902. Educated at Jesus College, Oxford, Garstang made the acquaintance of the Egyptologist, Flinders Petrie, and joined his excavations at Abydos in Egypt. Although Garstang was to spend several years working in Egypt, he did not confine himself to the boundaries of the British Empire, going on to dig in areas such as Jerusalem and Palestine. Likewise, in his scholarly contacts, he did not restrict himself to the British academic world, but corresponded regularly with continental scholars, particularly in France, and was even presented with the Legion d'Honneur in 1920 (Gurney, 2004).

Such weaving in and out of the space of Empire was far from uncommon. The anthropologist and anatomist, Elliot Smith, who was born in New South Wales and educated at the University of Sydney, made extensive use of imperial networks in the course of his career. After coming to England in 1896 on a James King traveling scholarship, he continued his research at St John's College, Cambridge, under the anatomist, Alexander Macalister, publishing some eight papers on cerebral morphology between 1896 and 1897. In 1901, he acted as consultant to the University of California's Hearst Egyptological expedition and in 1907 carried out an archaeological survey of Nubia together with Sir Gaston Maspero, George Andrew Reisner, and Frederic Wood Jones. However, later in his career, after being appointed to the chair of Anatomy at University College, London, he also became involved with anthropological fieldwork outside the Empire, in particular, Davidson Black's paleontological Chinese research, which yielded the famous "Peking skull" and other human fossils. Smith's own work also gained him fame outside the confines of British academia; in 1911, he was awarded the Prix Fauvel by the Anthropological Society of Paris (Richards, 2004).

The Empire was thus one of many spheres in which British scholars were active in this period. Moreover, it was not simply British scholars who were drawn to the various parts of the Empire for purposes of scientific research. Egypt, India, Australia, and many other locations attracted scholars from all over the world and, in this sense, the British Empire must be conceptualized as a truly international space of research. To take just one example, the Orientalist, Henry Ferdinand Blochmann, having studied Persian and Arabic under H. L. Fleischer at Leipzig and Haase at Paris, joined the British army in 1858 with the expressed intention of traveling to India to pursue his study of Eastern languages. There he collaborated with the British-born Arabic scholar, William Nassau Lees, and through him was appointed assistant professor of Arabic and Persian at the Calcutta Madrasa in 1861. In 1862, he became pro-rector of Doveton College, Calcutta, and went on to carry out archaeological tours in India and British Burma (Beveridge, 2004).

Nor were individual disciplines themselves bound by the borders of Empire. We have seen how individual scholars moved in and out of the imperial space in pursuit of particular scientific interests. Similarly, the Royal Geographical Society awarded

medals in the late 1880s not only to British and colonial scholars but also to European explorers of Africa, including the Germans, Georg Schweinfurth and Gustav Nachtigal. Continental scholars, from France, Germany, and Holland, in particular, gave papers to the Society and members of the RGS regularly corresponded and exchanged papers with their counterparts abroad (Butlin, 2009, pp. 268, 280). In 1877, the RGS's Expeditions Committee announced that it wanted to advance geographical science "to the exclusion of any dealings with territorial and commercial undertakings" (Bridges, 1973, pp. 222–223). As D. R. Stoddart (1980, p. 197) has shown, the final years of the nineteenth century were certainly a time when growing numbers of purely theoretical papers were appearing in the Society's journals. The role played by the RGS was clearly not that of a straightforward "tool of empire." Michael Heffernan (1994) was right to challenge the long-standing view that "European geography was European imperialism, albeit dressed up in a slightly more academic and scholarly guise" (pp. 93–94).

An International Republic of Letters

Belonging to a different group again are those scholars who not only engaged with imperial networks primarily in the pursuit of academic interests, but who made a positive virtue of their willingness to travel all over the world for the sake of their discipline. Indeed, many academics saw themselves as participating in an international *republic of letters* of which the British Empire was only one part. "International relationships in university study," declared the educationalist Michael Sadler in his introduction to the 1906 translation of Friedrich Paulsen's work on the German universities, "are closer today than at any previous time since the beginning of the sixteenth century" (Paulsen, 1906, p. vii). Traditionally, the nineteenth century has been seen by historians as the era of nationalism and imperialism; however, in recent scholarship, it has been increasingly recast as a period of growing globalization. This argument gains strength from the fact that many commentators at the time remarked on the growing interconnectedness of the various parts of the world, particularly in the field of scholarship. As Benedict Stuchtey and Peter Wende (2000) have argued in their study of British and German historiography between 1750 and 1950:

[T]he great European *res publica litteraria* still existed, that international community which, in the Middle Ages, had been attached to the church of Christ, and which, since the Renaissance and especially during the Enlightenment, had become a transnational congregation of men of letters. Out of this tradition, still vigorous in [the] nineteenth-century, grew numerous contacts, mutual perceptions, and transfers which contributed to the formation of modern university education in the age of nationalism. (p. 3)

Writing in the *Contemporary Review* in 1886, the German scholar and professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, Friedrich Max Müller, remarked upon the

continuing vitality of what he described as a “universal republic of letters” encompassing not only Europe but the entire globe:

The whole world seems writing, reading, and talking together ... Newton’s “Principia” are studied in Chinese, and the more modern works of Herschell, Lyell, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley [and] Lockyer, have created in the far East the same commotion as in Europe. Even books like my own, which stir up no passions, and can appeal to the narrow circle of scholars only, have been sent to me, translated not only into the principal languages of Europe, but into Bengali, Mahratti, Guzerathi, Japanese—nay, even into Sanskrit. (Müller, 1886, p. 790)

Moreover, he described eloquently how such an ideal could coexist happily with a hearty love of nation and empire. It does not “follow,” he wrote,

that because our Imperial patriotism is keen, our hearts are incapable of larger sympathies ... We want patriotism, just as we want municipal spirit, nay even clannishness and family pride. But all these are steps leading higher and higher till we can repeat with some of the greatest men the words of Terence, “I count nothing strange to me that is human.” (Müller, 1886, pp. 789–790)

There were indeed scholars whose careers became emblematic of this revitalized *republic of letters* whose extent was not contiguous with national or imperial boundaries.¹ Such, for example, was Thomas Henry Huxley. Having studied medicine at the University of London, he traveled on numerous expeditions both within and outside the British Empire as a scientific assistant surgeon. Among other places, he visited Sydney, South New Guinea, New Zealand, Cape Town, and Rio de Janeiro. In every place, he took an active part in local intellectual life. Later in his career, he was appointed Fullerian Professor of Physiology at the Royal Institution in London and was elected president of the Ethnological and Geological Societies. He also established a regular correspondence with leading continental scholars such as Ernst Haeckel, for whom he wrote the introduction to the 1879 English translation of his work, *Freedom in Science and Teaching*. He was likewise at the forefront of the Transatlantic Science Movement and served on the committee of E. L. Youmans’s *International Science Series*. In 1876, he visited America and collaborated with colleagues at Yale, Harvard, and Johns Hopkins University. He was even offered a professorship at Harvard (Desmond, 2004).

Huxley’s cosmopolitan career was also in step with broader trends among the British scientific community as a whole. In the late nineteenth century British scholars increasingly sought to establish international organizations and conferences related to their particular disciplines. Thus, Sir Archibald Geikie, appointed professor of geology at Edinburgh in 1871, was not just president of the British Geological Association but was also active in setting up the first international geological congresses (Oldroyd, 2004). Likewise, Sir John Keltie, Secretary to the Royal

¹ In contrast to this, however, it should be noted that Taylor, Hoyler, and Evans (2008) highlight the importance of regional scientific networks over the course of the eighteenth century, often centered on the use of a shared language. This development points to the decline of Latin as the common language of academia and the rise of vernacular scholarship.

Geographical Society, was instrumental in organizing the sixth International Geographical Congress held in London in 1895 (Baigent, 2004).

Even the organization that sounds from its name as though it would be particularly national, perhaps imperial, in focus—the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS)—was becoming considerably more cosmopolitan in the final years of the nineteenth century. When the Association met for the first time outside the British Isles—namely in Montreal in 1884—it was not national or imperial identity that took center stage in the discussions but rather the priorities of the various scientific disciplines represented there. In welcoming the delegates, who, significantly, included prominent continental and American scholars, the Canadian prime minister, John A. Macdonald, addressed his audience in the following terms:

I really do not know in what capacity I am called upon to address this audience, whether as a scientist or as a Canadian or as a member of the government. I cannot well say—I will say, however—I come here as a scientist. (Rayleigh, 2008, p. 35)

Likewise, Jean-Louis Beaudry, the mayor of Montreal, stressed in his address that “the student of almost every branch of science must find something worth learning” (p. 33) at the meeting. A similar impression is gained from the reports of the proceedings published in periodicals at the time. One report, which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* and was written by a Canadian delegate, G. M. Grant, addressed the delegates as representatives of their respective disciplines and pointed out the particular characteristics of the countryside around Montreal that might be of interest to them as scientists. Speaking of the range of cliffs known as The South Joggins, delegates were told: “The whole ground is classic to geological science; and it would be as unpardonable in a geologist to omit a visit to the South Joggins as for an Egyptologist to go to Cairo without seeing the Pyramids” (Grant, 1884, p. 237). The cosmopolitan attitude of the Association is also clear from the fact that it had deliberately scheduled its meeting in Montreal so that its members could also visit the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which was being held in Philadelphia a week later (p. 246). A similar sense of the international perspective of the BAAS is gained from looking at the causes it agreed to fund at the 1884 meeting. Along with the predictable grants to scientific projects within the British Isles and the Empire, it was agreed to provide funding to investigate the “volcanic phenomena of Vesuvius” and “earthquake phenomena of Japan” (British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1885, p. lxxvi).

Critiques of Imperialism

Whereas cosmopolitan scholars like Huxley confined themselves to promoting what may be termed the gospel of scientific internationalism, some of their disciples went on to develop nuanced critiques of imperialism while still making extensive use of the networks of empire. This included even those scientists employed directly by

the colonial state (Hodge, 2007; Tilley, 2011). In her 2011 study, *Africa as a Living Laboratory*, Helen Tilley has stressed the need for historians to deliberately foreground “a dimension of the interactions among power, political economy, and knowledge production that has as yet received little scholarly attention: the subversive relationship that could exist between science and empire” and the “processes of knowledge production subversive of the status quo” that could emerge from that relationship (p. 24). Indeed, it is noteworthy how many of those scholars who developed critiques of imperialism were working either directly for the colonial services or in disciplines directly related to the growth of the Empire and with most experience of traveling within its boundaries. Geographers were particularly important in this regard. A useful early example would be Alexander von Humboldt. Traveling widely in Latin America in the early years of the nineteenth century, he became very critical of systems of colonial rule. On the other hand, he was quite happy to make use of the networks of the British Empire for scientific purposes. In April 1836, for example, he wrote a letter to the Duke of Sussex, then president of the Royal Society, asking for access to British territories in order to set up a line of magnetic and meteorological stations (Rupke, 2008). Similarly, Helen Tilley (2011) has singled out anthropologists as being among “the most outspoken critics of colonialism’s imperfections and inadequacies” (p. 30). This is a point confirmed by George Stocking in his study, *Victorian Anthropology*, where he highlights the number of anthropologists working within the British Empire who took on “the role of defender . . . and explicator” of indigenous ways of life and modes of thought (Stocking, 1987, p. 273).

Among other prominent critics of empire who were active at the heart of the British academic establishment were members of a network of geographers who were also founders of the international anarchist movement, in particular, Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus. Both Kropotkin and Reclus were welcomed into the Royal Geographical Society, and invited to publish in leading British journals such as the *Contemporary Review*. This was despite their clear condemnation of the imperial project (Ferretti, 2011). Among others, Kropotkin and Reclus collaborated closely with the social evolutionist and town planner, Patrick Geddes. Geddes had been one of Huxley’s pupils at the School of Mines in London and had gone on to study natural sciences at the Sorbonne under Huxley’s friend, Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers. A complex character, holding chairs at the Universities of Dundee and Bombay, Geddes not only imbibed Huxley’s cosmopolitanism; he also pioneered the concept of regionalism as an alternative to national and imperial identity (Meller, 2004). In 1903, together with his friend and fellow sociologist, Victor Branford, Geddes founded the Sociological Society in London, which was used, in the words of John Scott (2007), as a “vehicle” for Geddes’s ideas, in particular the concept of regionalism. Branford, moreover, actively sought to promote regionalism internationally, corresponding with such eminent figures as Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, and Ferdinand Tönnies. In 1913 Geddes founded the International Regional

Survey Association and during World War I preached the importance of regionalism as an antidote to conflict. War, he argued, had been the outcome of the machinations of national and imperial governments based in capital cities; regional centers, on the other hand, were dedicated to the peaceful exchange of goods and ideas. Together with Branford, he published a series of volumes under the title, *The Making of the Future*, which set out his vision for a future society based on regional identity (Meller, 2004).

Other scholars and scientists who developed detailed critiques of the British Empire based on their own experiences of working within its boundaries specialized in the study of tropical disease. Such, for example, was Andrew Davidson, a former superintending surgeon in Mauritius, who was appointed as the first lecturer in tropical diseases at the University of Edinburgh. In his *Geographical Pathology* (1892), Davidson warned against further imperial expansion primarily on health grounds. Much of India, he concluded, had a pathology inimical to Europeans and continued emigration of Britons to this and other parts of the Empire would only further the physical degeneration of the race. H. Martyn Clark, a medical doctor, trained at Edinburgh and working in Amritsar, launched a similar critique of Britain's westernizing policy in India on the grounds of its dangerous side effects for health. In a paper presented to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1893, he condemned, in particular, what he described as this

mania for widening and improving streets, for introducing costly schemes of drainage and water-supply and for approximating Indian towns to the Western ideal . . . In the East everything Eastern is not of necessity bad, nor is a thing that is good in the West always suitable in the East . . . to supplant old habits by others, acquired under totally different conditions of life—natural[,] social, climatic—is not for the benefit of the people. By removing protecting walls and deflecting angles, we do but lay the city more open to the enemy. (Clark, 1893, p. 290)

The Society, which was based in Edinburgh and enjoyed close links with the university's medical community, provided a forum for many a critical discussion of empire in the period following its foundation in 1884 (Bell, 1995). In a lecture given to the Society in 1897, G. W. Prothero, professor of modern history at Edinburgh, gave a gloomy forecast for the future of the Empire, whose greatest problem, he argued, was an inability to function effectively across such a great expanse of territory (Prothero, 1897). Another speaker, the Edinburgh-trained medic and lecturer in tropical diseases and climatology, Robert W. Felkin, made the provocative suggestion that the British should take a much greater account of native customs in its government of India. This was particularly so in the case of health policy, he argued, where national self-conceit should play no role. "Every medical man owed a duty to science," he declared, "to observe with critical, but at the same time with no unfriendly or sarcastic eye, the acquired skill and empirical remedies used by uncivilized races" (Felkin, 1886, p. 16).

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, this chapter is not intended to challenge the notion that British academics and universities became intimately associated and bound up with the discourse of empire and imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is not in doubt. What I have attempted to re-examine, however, is the impact of this association upon the motivations and identities of the scholars themselves. It should not simply be assumed that a more intimate involvement and participation in imperial networks led to an agreement and identification with imperial goals. There was, indeed, a wide range of responses to empire from among British academics. There were certainly a number of scholars for whom the imperial project was an important personal mission whose aims they endeavored to further through their own work. By the same token, however, many others regularly traversed the highways and byways of empire pursuing goals little if at all related to imperialism or the imperial project. Instead, their movements, exchanges, and collaborative partnerships were directed by what they considered to be the peculiar concerns and priorities of their academic subject or research area. While these motives often led scholars to work within the bounds of empire, equally, they made use of extra-imperial networks when needs dictated. In some cases, this led to a positive identification with transnational collaboration, the clear articulation of cosmopolitan attitudes and the development of ideals of scientific internationalism. For other scholars, involvement in imperial networks and intellectual collaboration within the bounds of empire facilitated the emergence of critiques hostile to the imperial project; as we have seen, with a number of British scholars, familiarity with and participation in imperial networks seems to have bred contempt for the aims of empire rather than loyalty to its cause.

References

- Anderson, J. W. (1992). Poetics and Politics in ethnographic texts: A view from the colonial ethnography of Afghanistan. In R. H. Brown (Ed.), *Writing the social text: Poetics and politics of social science discourse* (pp. 91–116). New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Anderson, R. D. (2004). *European universities from the enlightenment to 1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, R. D. (2006). *British universities: Past and present*. London: Hambledon Continuum.
- Baigent, E. (2004). Keltie, Sir John Scott (1840–1927). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34269>
- Bell, M. (1995). Edinburgh and empire: Geographical science and citizenship for a 'new' age, ca. 1900. *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 111, 139–149. doi:10.1080/00369229518736956
- Benyon, J. A. (2004). Frere, Sir (Henry) Bartle Edward, first baronet (1815–1884), colonial governor. *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10171>
- Beveridge, H. (2004). Blochmann, Henry Ferdinand (1838–1878) (rev. by P. Loloi). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2659>

- Blouet, B. W. (2004). Mackinder, Sir Halford John (1861–1947). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34760>
- Bonney, T. G. (2004). Murchison, Sir Roderick Impey, baronet (1792–1871) (rev. by R. A. Stafford). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19555>
- Boulger, G. S. (2004). Macleay, Alexander (1767–1848) (rev. by B. H. Fletcher). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17655>
- Bridge, C., & Fedorowich, K. (Eds.). (2003). *The British world: Diaspora, culture, and identity*. London: Frank Cass.
- Bridges, R. C. (1973). Europeans and East Africans in the age of exploration. *The Geographical Journal*, 139, 220–232.
- British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS). (1885) Report of the 1884 BAAS meeting at Montreal. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.38241>
- Brown, R. H. (1993). Cultural representation and ideological domination. *Social Forces*, 71, 657–676. doi:10.1093/sf/71.3.657
- Butlin, R. A. (2009). *Geographies of empire: European empires and colonies c. 1880–1960*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, H. M. (1893). Remarks on malaria and acclimatisation. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 9, 281–302. doi:10.1080/00369229308732633
- Clayton, D. W. (2000). *Islands of truth: The imperial fashioning of Vancouver Island*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Cooper, F. (2005). *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Craig, J. E. (1984). *Scholarship and nation building: The universities of Strasbourg and Alsatian society, 1870–1939*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Crowe, M. J. (2004). Herschel, Sir John Frederick William, first baronet (1792–1871), mathematician and astronomer. *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13101>
- Davidson, A. (1892). *Geographical pathology: An inquiry into the geographical distribution of infective and climatic diseases*. Edinburgh: Y. J. Pentland.
- Desmond, A. (2004). Huxley, Thomas Henry (1825–1895). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14320>
- Driver, F. (2001). *Geography militant: Cultures of exploration and empire*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Felkin, R. W. (1886). *Introductory address to a course of lectures on diseases of the tropics and climatology*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.
- Ferretti, F. (2011). The correspondence between Élisée Reclus and Pëtr Kropotkin as a source for the history of geography. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 37, 216–222. doi:10.1016/j.jhg.2010.10.001
- Feuchtwang, S. (1973). The colonial formation of British social anthropology. In T. Asad (Ed.), *Anthropology and the colonial encounter* (pp. 71–100). London: Ithaca Press.
- Francis, M. (1994). Anthropology and social Darwinism in the British Empire: 1870–1900 [Issue supplement s1]. *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 40, 203–215. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8497.1994.tb00881.x
- Grant, G. M. (1884). The British Association at Montreal. *Contemporary Review*, 46, 235–251.
- Gurney, O. R. (2004). Garstang, John (1876–1956) (rev. P. W. M. Freeman). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33341>
- Heffernan, M. J. (1994). The science of empire: The French geographical movement and the forms of French imperialism, 1870–1920. In A. Godlewska & N. Smith (Eds.), *Geography and empire* (pp. 92–114). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hodge, J. M. (2007). *The triumph of the expert: Agrarian doctrines of development and the legacies of British colonialism*. Athens: University of Ohio Press.

- Hudson, B. (1977). The new geography and the new imperialism, 1870–1918. *Antipode*, 9, 12–19. doi:[10.1111/j.1467-8330.1977.tb00707.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.1977.tb00707.x)
- Jarausch, K. H. (1983). Higher education and social change: Some comparative perspectives. In K. H. Jarausch (Ed.), *The transformation of higher learning, 1860–1930: Expansion, diversification, social opening, and professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States* (pp. 9–36). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jöns, H. (2008). Academic travel from Cambridge University and the formation of centres of knowledge, 1885–1954. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34, 338–362. doi:[10.1016/j.jhg.2007.11.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2007.11.006)
- Kearns, G. (1997). The imperial subject: Geography and travel in the work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 22, 450–472. doi:[10.1111/j.0020-2754.1997.00450.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-2754.1997.00450.x)
- Kuklick, H., & Jones, R. A. (1978). The sins of the fathers: British anthropology and African colonial administration. In R. A. Jones (Ed.), *Research in Sociology of Knowledge: Sciences and Art, Vol. 1* (pp. 93–119). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Lambert, D., & Lester, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Colonial lives across the British Empire: Imperial careering in the long nineteenth century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Meller, H. (2004). Geddes, Sir Patrick (1854–1932). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33361>
- Morrison, C. (1984). Three systems of imperial ethnography: British official as anthropologist in India. In H. Kuklick & E. Long (Eds.), *Knowledge and society: Studies in the sociology of culture past and present* (Vol. 5, pp. 141–169). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Müller, F. M. (1886). Goethe and Carlyle. *Contemporary Review*, 49, 772–793.
- Oldroyd, D. (2004). Geikie, Sir Archibald (1835–1924). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33364>
- Otte, T. G. (2004). Rose, John Holland (1855–1942). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35829>
- Paulsen, F. (1906). *The German universities and university study*. New York: C. Scriber's Sons.
- Pietsch, T. (2010). Wandering scholars? Academic mobility and the British world, 1850–1940. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36, 377–387. doi:[10.1016/j.jhg.2010.03.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.03.002)
- Pietsch, T. (2011). Many Rhodes: Travelling scholarships and imperial citizenship in the British academic world, 1880–1940. *History of Education*, 40, 723–739. doi:[10.1080/0046760X.2011.594096](https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2011.594096)
- Prothero, G. W. (1897). The unity of the empire: The British colonial empire. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 13, 308–315. doi:[10.1080/14702549708555007](https://doi.org/10.1080/14702549708555007)
- Rayleigh, C. (2008). *The British Association's visit to Montreal, 1884: Letters*. San Diego: Icon Group International.
- Richards, G. (2004). Smith, Sir Grafton Elliot (1871–1937). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36143>
- Rupke, N. A. (2008). *Alexander von Humboldt: A metabiography*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Ryan, J. (1994). Visualizing imperial geography: Halford Mackinder and the colonial office visual instruction committee, 1902–11. *Cultural Geographies*, 1, 157–176. doi:[10.1177/147447409400100203](https://doi.org/10.1177/147447409400100203)
- Scott, J. (2007). Branford, Victor Verasis (1863–1930). *Oxford dictionary of national biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/97274>
- Stocking, G. (1987). *Victorian anthropology*. New York: Free Press.
- Stoddart, D. R. (1980). The RGS and the 'new geography': Changing aims and changing roles in nineteenth century science. *The Geographical Journal*, 146, 190–202. doi:[10.2307/632860](https://doi.org/10.2307/632860)
- Stuchey, B. (1999). The international of critics: German and British scholars during the South African war (1899–1902). *South African Historical Journal*, 41, 149–171. doi:[10.1080/02582479908671889](https://doi.org/10.1080/02582479908671889)

- Stuchtey, B., & Wende, P. (Eds.). (2000). *British and German historiography, 1750–1950: Traditions, perceptions, and transfers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Symonds, R. (1991). *Oxford and empire: The last lost cause?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, P. J., Hoyler, M., & Evans, D. M. (2008). A geohistorical study of “the rise of modern science”: Mapping scientific practice through urban networks, 1500–1900. *Minerva*, 46, 391–410. doi:[10.1007/s11024-008-9109-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-008-9109-8)
- Tilley, H. (2011). *Africa as a living laboratory: empire, development and the problem of scientific knowledge*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Välilmaa, J. (2004). Nationalization, localization and globalization in Finnish higher education. *Higher Education*, 48, 27–54. doi:[10.1023/B:HIGH.0000033769.69765.4a](https://doi.org/10.1023/B:HIGH.0000033769.69765.4a)
- Wesseling, H. L. (1996). *Divide and rule: The partition of Africa, 1880–1914*. London: Praeger.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work’s Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

