

Baedeker's Universe

By Edward Mendelson¹

For more than a hundred years, Karl Baedeker was Europe's ideal parent. In his "Handbooks for Travellers," which by 1914 described all of Europe and North America, and much of Asia and Africa, he did more for his readers than guide their way to agreeable hotels, picturesque churches, and sublime vistas. He also set an example of private and public virtues ranging from thrift to patriotism, comforted the timid and encouraged the daring, taught the proper response to courtesy or cunning, combined moral probity with practical wisdom, and even while warning his readers away from unseemly pleasures let slip the knowledge of where they might be found.

The name Karl Baedeker designates both a man and a corporate personality. The man was a patriotic German in the early-nineteenth-century mold. The corporate personality was fluent in a dozen languages, and managed during the later nineteenth century and early twentieth to be a patriot of three or four fatherlands at the same time. The man was born to a line of printers and booksellers in Essen in 1801 and died of overwork in Coblenz in 1859. The corporate personality - an adaptation by his sons and grandsons of the personality of the man - grew in energy and authority from 1860 to 1914, resumed much of its strength after 1918, found itself in bad company after 1933, and raised itself from the rubble, chastened and subdued, in 1948. The corporate personality still survives as a publisher of guidebooks, but with little of the style and less of the authority it enjoyed during its years of empire. This essay will distinguish the two personalities by reserving "Karl Baedeker" for the man, "Baedeker" for his corporate successor.



The Founder Karl Baedeker

Karl Baedeker's ascendancy could have occurred at only one moment in history. Twenty years before, Europe was too preoccupied with other matters to have any use for his talents. Twenty years after, the tasks he accomplished on his own had

become too large for any one man to attempt them. (After his death, the Baedeker family maintained its preeminence largely because he had been astute enough to father three sons capable of continuing his work.) Earlier centuries provided no audience for the kind of practical guidebook Karl Baedeker devised. Travelers in the era of the Grand Tour, in the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries, brought with them servants able to supply most of their needs, and letters of introduction to those whose servants could supply the rest. Travelers in the later eighteenth century, for whom travel was increasingly a matter of consciousness rather than of class, pursued exotic experience as a means toward more intense self-awareness, and the guidebooks that began to appear for their benefit emphasized the picturesque more than the practical. The climate propitious for Karl Baedeker emerged abruptly, after a twenty-year interval when pleasure-travel in Europe ceased. This was the interval that began in 1792, when revolutionary France went to war against the established monarchies, and ended only with the defeat of imperial France. When the roads of Europe, which had been improved at Napoleon's command, once again offered safe passage, armies of travelers were quick to occupy them. The diligence, or public stagecoach, provided a new degree of comfort for the traveler who could not afford a carriage of his own, and the more cautious traveler could sign up for the new conducted tours first offered in 1815 by the publisher Galignani from his offices in Paris. The ordinary traveler, and not only the connoisseur, began to seek out painting and sculpture in addition to mountain and gorge. The era of mass travel had begun in earnest.

But for every traveler who joined a guided tour, there were others - the many thousands who combined within themselves a romantic personality and a bourgeois character - who insisted on traveling alone. For these travelers Karl Baedeker perfected his wholly new kind of guidebook. "Its principal object," he wrote in the foreword to his guide to Germany and Austria, was "to keep the traveler at as great a distance as possible from the unpleasant, and often wholly invisible, tutelage of hired servants and guides (and in part from the aid of coachmen and hotelkeepers), to assist him in standing on his own feet, to render him independent, and to place him in a position from which he may receive his own impressions with clear eyes and lively heart." *Deutschland*, eighth edition, 1858). When Karl Baedeker set up shop in Coblenz in 1827,

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after studying at Heidelberg and working in the book trade at Berlin, he had no intention whatever of providing this or any other kind of guidebook. The first of his travel books, which he published more or less by accident, was written by someone else. A bankrupt publishing house that he bought out in 1832 had recently issued a scholarly survey of the history, scenery, and art of the Rhineland, Professor Johann August Klein's *Rheinreise von Mainz bis Köln*. Around three years later, when the stock of the German edition ran out, he decided to revise the book himself. He kept Klein's name on the title page, but he simplified Klein's prose, added practical information on transport and accommodation, enlarged the range of the book so that it extended from Strasbourg to Rotterdam, and described excursions down tributary rivers and to other cities in Holland. The Baedeker empire stirred, and began to grow.

A rival empire began stirring at about the same time. In 1829, John Murray (son of the publisher whom Byron regarded, not always affectionately, as "My Murray") began organizing the notes he had taken on his travels through Europe. Murray's "A Hand Book for Travellers in Holland, Belgium, and along the Rhine, and throughout Northern Germany" (subtitled "The Continent") - appeared in 1836. It enjoyed an immediate success, and was followed by a handbook for southern Germany, Austria, and Hungary in 1837, and by another for Switzerland in 1838. Among the most appreciative readers of these books was Karl Baedeker, who also became one of the most appreciative friends of their author. In 1839 when Karl Baedeker published two new guidebooks of his own, one for Holland and one for Belgium, he borrowed Murray's most important innovation, the arrangement of descriptive and practical information along numbered "routes" that extended from one large town to another. Karl Baedeker also adopted Murray's word handbook (and in doing so reclaimed for the German language a word Murray had borrowed from it). He subtitled each of his new guides "Handbüchlein für Reisende." When Karl Baedeker issued his guide to Germany and the Austrian Empire in 1842, he styled it as a full-fledged *Buch* rather than a modest *Büchlein*, a *Handbuch für Reisende durch Deutschland und den oesterreichischen Kaiserstaat*. Karl Baedeker's guide to Switzerland followed two years later. By this time, the brown cloth covers of Murray's handbook to Germany had become a familiar sight in Coblenz. In 1846, Karl Baedeker bettered Murray by introducing the bright red cloth that was later mutated by most other guidebook publishers, eventually by Murray himself.



From yellow to red: "Rheinreise", 3. Edition 1839 und "Schweiz", 3. Edition 1851.

Karl Baedeker acknowledged in his prefaces the debt he owed Murray (in 1839 he called Murray's handbook "the most distin-

guished guide ever published"), and he repaid it by sending regular consignments of new information from his travels. But he also pointed out, in later years, that while he borrowed the outer form of Murray's handbooks, he used different principles in choosing what to put inside. Most guidebooks, he observed, suffered from one of two opposing defects. Either they offered bare lists of landmarks without any practical advice or historical instruction, or they provided such detailed and evocative accounts of anything worth seeing, and of the emotions to be felt on seeing it, that the traveler was effectively spared the trouble of going to see it for himself. Karl Baedeker chose a middle way. In his descriptions of a place worth visiting, he gave his readers precisely the information they needed to find their way cheaply and conveniently, and precisely the information they needed in order to appreciate what they saw. He trusted them to provide their aesthetic and emotional responses for themselves.

What his readers could not provide on their own - hints on foreign customs, cures for local ailments, caveats on clothing and diet - Karl Baedeker provided in plenty. His tone was reassuringly steadfast and proverbial. He warned walkers in Switzerland that, "As everyone knows, it is harmful to bring an overheated horse to its stall, and it is no better for men." He also warned them that "A warm bath weakens the entire body for the following day." A natural philosopher of the time, using the new vocabulary of the time, might have noted that a traveler with a Karl Baedeker guidebook in hand constituted a system. To the traveler himself, the relationship he enjoyed with Karl Baedeker seemed more like a personal intimacy. And like all worthwhile intimacies, it both nurtured and liberated.

In his earliest guidebooks Karl Baedeker identified himself only as publisher, not as author. He abandoned this transparent pretense of anonymity in 1849 with the sixth edition of the *Rheinreise*, on the title page of which "K. Baedeker" first named himself as author and editor. (He claimed to have been reluctant to put himself forward. In the prefaces to some later volumes, he wrote: "There are certain peculiar persons who take an anonymous book in hand with mistrust; they are not infrequently met with by the author. To satisfy these doubters, the name has been appended to the title page.") This first signed opus provides a convenient illustration of Karl Baedeker's mature method. He wasted no time in calling attention to the special merits of his book. On the title page he listed the eight city plans included within, and mentioned large-scale maps and other illustrations as well. (Karl Baedeker and his sons always provided more and better maps than anyone else did; nothing less would adequately serve the traveler who wanted to move quickly and freely through medieval streets or mountain passes.) After practicality came patriotism: on the verso of the title page appeared three stanzas from a poem praising not only the Rhine but, *inter alia*, German kings, German words, and German wines. The name of the poet, Max von Schenkendorf, and the date of the poem, 1814, were enough to remind every German reader of Prussia's triumphant uprising against Napoleon. (Karl Baedeker's patriotism, at a time when Germany was still a loose confederation of duchies and

kingdoms, tended to be more poetical than practical. But he included in his guide to Deutschland the full legal argument for the liberation of Schleswig from the king of Denmark - the only foreign power who gave German nationalists someone to unite against.) Then, in the preface, came the emphatic statement that "The entire contents of the book are based exclusively on personal experience." This set the stage for everything that followed.

The handbook itself opened with a fifty-page introduction. This first described various means of travel through the Rhine valley (a walking tour was best), then gave a full table of steamboat fares and a list of railway lines (with a history of each), followed by passport requirements (not stringent). Next came prevailing rates for meals and rooms, and - a Karl Baedeker specialty - two pages of thoroughly exhaustive advice on tipping. A porter in Mannheim, for example, should receive twelve kreuzer for carrying a trunk weighing more than forty pounds, eight kreuzer for one weighing less; in Mainz the same sums applied, but for trunks of more and less than fifty pounds; in Coblenz the sums were four Silbergroschen and two-and-a-half; and so forth through a half-dozen different varieties of trunks and cases in a half-dozen cities. (Karl Baedeker called tipping a "wicked practice.") After this came more agreeable matters: Rhenish art, history, geology, geography, and wines. The introduction came to a rousing close with the text of an eighteenth century "Rhine Wine Song." Only then was Karl Baedeker ready to take the reader along the book's thirty-four routes, each with its own occasions for enthusiasm and grumbling, each with its detailed listings of hotels, theaters, coffeehouses, baths, Bierstuben, and bazaars, and each with its appropriate pearls from German poetry.

For travelers who preferred to sample the treasures offered by his handbooks rather than consume the entire feast, Karl Baedeker introduced the star system. Beginning in 1844 he marked with an asterisk those few points of interest that hurried travelers should not fail to see. Later he added a second asterisk for especially stellar attractions, and extended the system to his lists of hotels and restaurants. Karl Baedeker's asterisks served as his laconic substitute for the adjectival raptures of competing authors, and he awarded them with careful and sometimes idiosyncratic discretion. Mont Blanc, during his lifetime and for almost half a century after, earned no stars at all: "The view from the summit is unsatisfactory." The view from the Eggischhorn (one star) was better, from the Rigi-Kulm (two stars) very satisfactory indeed. The view from the Rigi-Kulm at sunrise was enough to excite Karl Baedeker to a manner that can best be described as cautionarily ecstatic:

An hour before sunrise the Alphorn sounds the reveille. [In the hotel) all is again bustle and confusion, everyone fearful of missing the sun's ascent. Little by little the corridors empty, as, with drowsy eyes, wrapped in shawls, cloaks, even blankets, all hasten to the summit to hail the sun's first rays. Happy is he on whom they shine unobscured! Scarcely one out of four travelers to the Rigi can boast such good fortune, and the old visitors' book records many hopes deceived by fog, rain, or snow. Yet the struggle of the sun against the fog and cloud is often extremely striking, and the Alpine hunter in [Schiller's] 'Tell says justly:

And under his feet lies an ocean of mist, He perceives no more the cities of men; He beholds the earth only through rifts in the clouds, Beneath the deep waters, the verdurous plain. [Die Schweiz, fifth edition, 1853]

Although Switzerland gave Karl Baedeker countless opportunities to quote Schiller, it could not distract him from the requirements of scholarship - he reportedly hired Theodore Mommsen, no less, to prepare notes on Roman settlements - or from the petty annoyances of travel. His notes on the Bernese Oberland concluded with this heartfelt paragraph of warning:

Patience and Small Coin are indispensable to the traveler in the Bernese Oberland, especially in the Grindelwald. Attempts are made on his purse under every pretence and in every form. Here strawberries, flowers, and crystals are proffered to him, chamois and marmots displayed; urchins stand on their head and wave their feet; cretins and cripples implore his aid; nearly every hut dispatches a troop of mendicant infants or squabbling urchins; at every turn a virtuoso on the Alphorn is heard, or a quartet of underage Alpine songstresses on parade; often a pistol shot is fired off in order to waken an echo; finally, there are the many unavoidable gates, which a half-dozen children expect a gratuity for opening. All this is an inevitable consequence of a massive invasion of foreigners, which has exercised a pernicious influence on the morals of the valley.

Readers responded with gratitude to Karl Baedeker's protective care for their purses. As an English journalist of the 1850s wrote, "He is the great terror of continental extortionists!" His incorruptibility and thrift became proverbial, so much so that no one seems to have objected that he might have been thinking of his own interest, as well as the traveler's, when he warned that "no sort of frugality is more ill-suited to a journey than to travel with the aid of an outdated edition of a guidebook." But at last his long campaign against grasping innkeepers and rapacious porters took its toll on his spirit. When he published his handbook to Paris in 1855 he dispensed with the poetry that normally graced his opening pages, and began with some straightforward prose: "The first, second, and third most important thing in travel is money. With money, most other deficiencies may be remedied." Nonetheless, Paris itself managed to stimulate him to his customary enthusiasm. If any patriotic indignation against France still remained with him, he gave few signs, of it - although he was careful to soothe the sensibilities of his countrymen by noting that the handbook's summary account of French history was designed to elucidate the monuments of the capital, and only for that reason emphasized events glorious to France. Early in his introduction, even before listing the opening hours for museums and galleries, he printed transcriptions of streetpeddlers' cries and children's songs, complete with music for "Marguerite" and "Sur le pont d'Avignon". These pleasures were available gratis.

Paris was the last of Karl Baedeker's conquests. After his death in 1859 his empire passed to his sons, and his

charismatic authority gave way to a bureaucracy of editors and agents. The first expansionary thrust of the new generation was linguistic, and rendered the Baedeker empire trilingual. Near the end of Karl Baedeker's reign French translations of the guides to the Rhine and Switzerland had begun to appear regularly, and at the time of his death preparations were in hand for French versions of his other handbooks. Under his sons' administration, a full line of English translations was added, starting in 1861 with *A Handbook for Travellers on the Rhine*. By the end of the decade Baedeker had seized much of the English-language market for continental guidebooks; a "Baedeker" was becoming a synonym for a guidebook, and relations between the House of Murray and the House of Baedeker were turning noticeably chilly. John Murray had meanwhile expanded his own territory to include his native England, an island stronghold that must have seemed safe even from Baedeker. Baedeker invaded in 1878 with an English-language handbook to London, and overran the entire island in 1887 with an English language handbook to Great Britain. Two years later, and thirty years after the death of Karl Baedeker, an embittered John Murray publicly accused his old friend of plagiarism. He also intimated that Karl Baedeker's sole contribution to the art of the guidebook had been the addition of lists of Bierstuben to material lifted from Murray. The next edition of Baedeker's guide to Great Britain made a point of urging readers in search of more detailed information to consult the guidebooks published by "Messrs Baddeley and Ward".

Karl Baedeker's three sons administered the firm one after the other. The first, Ernst Baedeker, extended the family empire to London and northern Italy before his early death in 1861. He was succeeded by his brother Karl, who expanded the empire upward through his exploration of Alpine peaks and made preparations for expanding it outward to Egypt. In paragraphs like this one from the 1864 edition of *Switzerland* the younger Karl Baedeker honored his father's principle of writing strictly from "personal experience":

The Silberhorn, once deemed inaccessible, was ascended for the first time, Aug. 4th, 1863, by Ed. v. Fellenberg and the editor, accompanied by the guides P. Michel, H. Baumann and P. Jnäbenit of Grindelwald. The party started from Bellevue at 4 a.m., traversed the entire Eiger and Mönch glaciers, ascended the Schneehorn to the r., and crossing the N. slope of the Jungfrau, attained the summit of the Silberhorn at 4:30 p.m. The following night was passed on the precipitous icy slope of the Schneehorn, not one of the party daring to close an eye. .

This was an improvement even on the elder Karl Baedeker, who once demonstrated his refusal to trust anyone else's eyes by writing in the 1851 edition of *Deutschland*: "The writer of these lines made the passage [from Pola to Fiume] by night and regrets that he can report nothing about it."

During the 1860s Baedeker published guidebooks to Italy (in three volumes) and to London. But it concentrated its energies less on territorial growth than on revisions of earlier volumes (much of northern Italy had already appeared in the handbook to Austria), and the character of the guidebooks remained essentially as the founder had left it. During the 1870s, around the time when the younger Karl Baedeker's health failed and the

youngest brother, Fritz, took his place, the firm began its great period of expansion. In 1872 it moved its editorial offices to Leipzig, the center of German publishing. From there, every few years it issued an entirely new handbook, each with a front cover whose lettering declared ownership of some vast new region. Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria* appeared in 1875, Baedeker's *Lower Egypt* in 1877, Baedeker's *Sweden and Norway* in 1879, Baedeker's *Russia and Baedeker's Greece* in 1883, Baedeker's *France* in two volumes (later four) in 1884-85, Baedeker's *Great Britain* in 1887, Baedeker's *Upper Egypt* in 1891, Baedeker's *United States* in 1893, Baedeker's *Canada* in 1894, Baedeker's *Spain and Portugal* in 1897, Baedeker's *Riviera* in 1898, Baedeker's *Constantinople and Asia Minor* in 1905, Baedeker's *Mediterranean* (which added North Africa to previously occupied territory) in 1909, Baedeker's *India* in 1914.² Before enlarging its territory Baedeker often gave advance warning in the form of an "excursion" appended to an existing handbook. Southern Italy, for example, included an "excursion to Athens" fourteen years before Baedeker published *Greece*. London included excursions outside the capital thirteen years before publication of *Great Britain*. An excursion to Peking was added to *Russia* in 1904; only the outbreak of war in 1914 halted Baedeker's advance into China and Japan.



The publishing house in Leipzig. The offices were on the first floor.

Like any ascendant empire, Baedeker had the power to expand because it had the power to change. Karl Baedeker's handbooks continued to serve as the basic model for the firm's later productions, but in the hands of Fritz Baedeker important aspects of content and construction were altered. As in the work of Karl Baedeker, the practical needs of the traveler still received full attention - readers learned how to treat themselves for sunstroke and frostbite, learned where to find water closets in London and shoeshines in Cairo, learned in Rome to be wary of "practitioners styling themselves 'American dentists' without warrant" and in Turkey to be wary of border guards who might confiscate their Baedekers - but the romantic enthusiasm of the father gave way to the

² The *Guides to France* (outside Paris) were written in French, and never appeared in German. The guide to *Canada* appeared only in English. Most of the other guide appeared in three languages, although plans for translated versions of the German guides to *Constantinople* and to *India* were interrupted by the Great War.

scientific exactitude of his sun. The quotations from Schiller and Schenkendorf gradually disappeared. In their place appeared surveys of geology and religion, statistical summaries of ethnography and education, historical accounts of architecture and archaeology, plus annotated bibliographies, Outlines of grammar and vocabulary for languages ranging from Norwegian to Hindustani, and, in almost every edition of every title, newly drawn and ever more detailed maps. In the 1870s Baedeker began replacing its old engraved city plans with two- and three-colored lithographed versions. The first map that made its initial appearance in the new style was that of Jerusalem the city of David and Jesus; the first of the existing maps to be replaced was that of Potsdam, the city of Frederick the Great.

For its new handbooks, and for many of its revisions of older ones, Baedeker relied on specialists. The guide to Palestine and Syria was written by the Professor of Oriental Languages at Basel (who later moved, like Baedeker, to Leipzig); the guides to Egypt by professors at Berlin, Tübingen and elsewhere; the guides to France by “A. Delafontaine, notre collaborateur français depuis 1872”; the guides to Britain and America by James F. Muirhead, who also supervised other English editions; and the guide to India, begun by the general director of the North German Lloyd shipping line, was finished by Dr. Georg Wegener while traveling in the region with the Crown Prince of Prussia. None of these authors was named on a title page, although each received full acknowledgment in the prefaces. There was some justice in this. Despite the diversity of authors who gathered material for the handbooks, the finished works sustained a remarkably consistent style throughout - and did so in three languages. This was the result of Fritz Baedeker’s firm administration, exercised through in-house editors who enforced a consistent style. (In the 1860s, before Fritz took charge, some of the English editions, prepared by a Scottish law professor, sounded positively fligid.) The name “Karl Baedeker” on all the title pages accurately reflected an authorship that was uniquely corporate and personal at once.

Personal as the style of “Karl Baedeker” continued to seem, it was no longer quite the style of Karl Baedeker. Under Fritz Baedeker’s direction, the handbooks’ prose grew more efficient and compressed, and by far the most striking element of the new style was a device that deserves to be recognized in handbooks of rhetoric as “the Baedeker parenthesis.” One of its many functions was to juxtapose, without irony, the poetical and the practical. The best example of a Baedeker parenthesis was written not by Baedeker but by E. M. Forster in imitation of Baedeker. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, while Mrs. Herriton “was not one to detect the hidden charms of Baedeker... Philip could never read ‘The view from the Rocca (small gratuity) is finest at sunset’ without a catching at the heart.” Philip might have been overcome had he read these sentences about the Frankenburg, near Aix, in the 1878 edition of *The Rhine*:

The pond surrounding the castle was once a large lake, in which, according to tradition, was sunk the magic ring of Fastrada (p. 130), the last wife of Charlemagne. Attracted to this spot by its influence, the monarch is said to have sat here for days, gazing on the lake, and mourning for his lust consort. - (As far as the Gillesbach, near the Frankenburg, ordinary cabfare is charged.)

Baedeker used the parenthesis most often as a rapid indicator of the quality of hotels and restaurants, as in these descriptions of small towns chosen at random from the 1896 *Southern Italy*: “Pescara (Alb. Rebecchino, near the station, with trattoria, clean; *Railway Restaurant*, mediocre), a fortified town with 5000 inhab., is situated in an unhealthy plain”; or “Sala Consilina (Alb. Morino, dirty; cab to the town, 50 c.), the seat of a sub-prefect, picturesquely situated on a slope, overlooked by a medieval castle and the wooded summits of the Monte Cavallo.” It was this sort of economy and precision that Bertrand Russell had in mind when he identified Baedeker as one of the two major influences on his prose style. (The other was Milton.)

A Baedeker parenthesis among the listings of unpretentious hotels in Jaffa, in the 1894 edition of *Palestine and Syria*, caused the firm some difficulty:

Palestine Hotel (landlord, Kaminitz), in the German Colony; Hotel tip France (pl. 14³; landlord, Bost), on the Jerusalem road; Howard’s Hotel (pl. 13; landlord, Howard, an Arab), on the road to the German colony. These are second class hotels and a little cheaper; bargain with the landlord advisable.

Howard, a Maltese of Syrian ancestry whose name was Awwad, claimed that Baedeker had libeled him by calling him an Arab, and had compounded the libel by telling travelers to bargain with him. A British jury in Malta agreed. Baedeker was obliged to excise the offending paragraph, but Howard then offered to refuse damages if Baedeker would continue to list his hotel in the handbook. Baedeker instead added a sentence to the preface, noting that “hotels which cannot be accurately characterized without exposing the editor to risk of legal proceedings are left unmentioned.” Howard went out of business not long afterward. Baedeker, the target of many similar lawsuits, tended to win in the marketplace on the rare occasions when it lost in court. It similarly triumphed over the complaints of native Roman druggists against the handbooks’ recommendations of their German and English rivals, and the complaints of Neapolitan tradesmen against the handbooks reports that thefts had occurred from trunks left in Italian baggagecars. Baedeker was supremely confident of its own rectitude, and its confidence was wholly shared by its readers.

As these examples suggest, Baedeker’s ethnography, like all the other scientific learning in the handbooks, was very much of its age. Baedeker’s science was first of all classical and Baconian: it concerned itself entirely with the object under observation, and took the observer for granted. At a time when natural philosophy had long since ceased to believe it concerned itself with the manifestations of a creating deity, Baedeker was scarcely alone in assuming not merely that the observer was separate from the observed, but that the observer was therefore superior. And Baedeker was also scarcely alone in assuming that the observing northern European was consequently the most superior form of

³ This indicates the number identifying the hotel on the map of the city.

humanity. Although, like any ethnographer of the time, Baedeker recognized a degree of cultural relativism (“Orientals accuse Europeans of doing everything the wrong way, such as writing from left to right, while they do the reverse, and uncovering their head on entering a room, while they remove their shoes, but keep their heads covered”), the Baedeker handbooks never seriously doubted that in lower latitudes morals grew slack and manners coarse. Honor and dignity could be found in every climate, but less frequently and less predictably in southern ones. Whatever the beauties of Italy, “there are few countries where the patience is more severely taxed.” However well educated a Spaniard might be, the traveler should “avoid turning the conversation on serious matters, and should above all refrain from expressing an opinion on religious or political questions.” (In contrast, the only thing Baedeker found objectionable among Norwegians was an occasional excess of piety.) As for the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, Baedeker’s advice on “Intercourse with Orientals” noted that “many are mere children, whose waywardness should excite compassion rather than anger, and who often display a touching simplicity and kindness of disposition.” The westerner’s chief obligation in the East was to live up to his own highest standards, and “do all in his power to sustain the well established reputation of the ‘kilmeh franjiyeh,’ the ‘word of a Frank,’ in which orientals are wont to place implicit confidence.” (When a westerner violated western standards, especially for commercial gain, Baedeker’s judgment was merciless. The handbook to Canada reported that a certain cliff was “defaced with the staring advertisement of a Quebec tradesman, whom, it is hoped, all right-minded tourists will on this account religiously boycott.” Especially despicable was the all-too-frequent con man who, pretending to be Baedeker’s agent, extorted advertising fees from hotelkeepers; Baedeker insisted that he “be denounced without pity to the police.”)

True to its time, the corporate Baedeker, although it spoke as the epitome of the educated European bourgeois, regarded national (i.e., ethnographic) character as more significant than social class. While Baedeker had no hesitation in recognizing class loyalties - “the fiendish proceedings of the Communists during the second ‘Reign of Terror,’ 20th - 28th May, 1871” received no stars in the handbook to Paris - these loyalties were clear and consistent only in northern Europe. Elsewhere, matters were different. “The Spaniard of the lower classes,” for example, “possesses much more common sense and a much healthier dislike of humbug than his so-called superiors.” Similarly, much of the blame for the corruption of municipal government in America could be attributed to “the indifference of the better class of citizens, who are apt to neglect the duty of voting at municipal elections, or when they do vote condone the faults of a Ring which professes to belong to their own political party.” Baedeker’s confidence in northern Europe allowed the firm to encourage national pride in French and English readers as well as in Germans. When in 1866 the first French edition of the handbook to London appeared, any reader who hesitated before visiting *la perfide Albion* was comforted by a footnote explaining that the book’s summary of English history was designed to elucidate the monuments of the capital, and only for that reason emphasized events glorious to England. With the substitution of one or two words, this was the same sentence Karl Baedeker had

written to comfort German visitors to Paris. Even the Franco-Prussian war put only a mild strain on Baedeker’s tact; the reference to the “fiendish proceedings of the Communists” appeared only briefly in the French editions, although it persisted in the English for some years. Reading from his Baedeker, a French visitor to Calais could be proud to learn that although the English had “seized the city in 1347 after a siege of eleven months,” in 1558 “le duc François de Guise retook it in seven days.” At the same time, an English visitor could be proud to learn from his Baedeker that in 1558 “the Duke of Guise with 30,000 men succeeded in finally expelling the small English garrison (500 men) after a siege of seven days” - which put rather a different complexion on the matter.

This international outlook permitted Baedeker to recover in part from the disaster of the Great War, when the firm lost most of its wealth and Fritz Baedeker lost one of his sons. During the 1920s new editions appeared of most of the guides to western Europe, some of them far more detailed than anything attempted before. But the handbooks to France, although still reprinted, were no longer revised, and outside western Europe the Baedeker empire was reduced to Canada (in a middling revision) and Egypt (in a magnificent one). After the death of Fritz Baedeker in 1925 and the succession of his son Hans, Baedeker continued to adapt to changing times. Travelers by air found this characteristic reassurance in the 1931 English edition of the handbook to Belgium:

Persons ordinarily subject to sea-sickness may possibly find themselves troubled by air-sickness; it is advisable to keep the extremities warm and to have plenty of fresh air around the face. Chewing gum (obtainable on the aircraft) is recommended as a preventative... There is no cause for alarm when the aircraft “banks” when turning or “dips” owing to gusts of wind, or when the engines slow down, a sign that the pilot intends to fly at a lower height.



Baedeker’s 100-year anniversary 1927.

Meanwhile, the class loyalties of the prewar Baedeker altered to accommodate what a preface called “the evolution of historical and artistic conceptions.” Through 1914, all editions of the handbook to Belgium and Holland had noted airily that “During the 13 - 15th centuries revolutions seem almost to have been the order of the day in Ghent.” The 1931 edition altered this to read: “As in the rest of Belgium, Ghent in the 14th. cent. rang with the struggles of the artisans, to whom the prosperity of the city was really due, to obtain the upper hand.”

But the new guide to Belgium also gave indications that Baedeker had not fully learned how much adaptation and

change were required by postwar conditions. In 1932 the small towns of Dinant and Aerschot sued Baedeker for damages over statements in the handbook that German forces had been acting in response to civilian sniping when they destroyed the two towns and shot hundreds of townspeople in 1914. It was noted that Baedeker had inserted these statements into the German and English editions of the handbook, while the original French version had said nothing of the kind. When the Belgian courts ruled evenhandedly that the handbooks should have included both the Belgian and the German versions of the events, Hans Baedeker could only accept the justice of the decision. It was difficult to maintain the family's traditional self-assurance when the matter in dispute was not errors in arithmetic by Italian waiters but massacres of civilians by German soldiers.

After 1933 Baedeker lost even more cause for self-assurance. When the handbook for the Mediterranean was revised (in German only) in 1934, the description of the Mediterranean peoples that had appeared in the first edition in 1909 was transformed into a description of the Mediterranean "races." A few new editions of other handbooks appeared in the 1930s, but Baedeker's energies were clearly at an ebb. In 1943 the firm was directed to publish, for the benefit of the German army, a guide titled *Das Generalgouvernement*, the name used by the Nazis for the puppet state they set up in what was left of Poland. The book makes depressing reading, even if its justifications for the German conquest and its exclamations over the New Order are limited to an introductory chapter by a functionary from the Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit. Late in 1943 Baedeker's headquarters in Leipzig were totally destroyed in a fire set off by a Royal Air Force bomb.

In a crucial sense, however, the end had come fifteen years earlier. It was marked by the publication of a few sentences whose significance probably went unrecognized at the time. In the revised handbooks to Italy that appeared between 1928 and 1932, Baedeker wrote: "The traveller in a foreign country should do his best to win its respect and friendship for the nation which he represents, by his tact and reserve, and by refraining from noisy behaviour and contemptuous remarks (in public buildings, hotels, etc.) and especially from airing his political views. Conduct of an overbearing nature appears little less than barbaric to the Italian... With these words Baedeker tacitly, perhaps unconsciously, acknowledged that the conditions that had made its empire possible no longer existed. The fixity and certitude of knowledge in the nineteenth century had given way to the relativity and uncertainty of the twentieth. The detached and autonomous observer no longer reigned over the object; in his place was the observer who was implicated in the act of observation. Had a prewar traveler, intent on a journey south, been able to read the words of the postwar Baedeker, he might well have been shocked enough to stay home. It would never have occurred to him that the people in the countries he planned to visit might observe him as he observed them - much less that they might be qualified to judge whether he was worthy of two stars. Or one. Or none.

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