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978-1-108-05044-9 - Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Macedonia, &c.: During the Years 1812 and 1813

Henry Holland

Frontmatter

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Sir Henry Holland (1788–1873) was a passionate and intrepid traveller from a young age. In addition to a distinguished career as court physician – first to Caroline of Brunswick, then to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert – he sought to keep two months of each year free to travel. His trip to Greece formed part of a European tour that Holland undertook in 1812–13 after having taken his medical degree at Edinburgh. Holland focuses on the lesser-known islands and parts of Macedonia and Albania, and gives a unique first-hand account of the Albanian vizier Ali Pasha (1740–1822), whom he befriended while visiting his court. The publication of Holland's travelogue in 1815 enhanced his reputation greatly and he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society that year. The book contributed to the early nineteenth-century fascination with Greece that would later lead Lord Byron to join the Greek War of Independence.

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DURING THE YEARS

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BY

HENRY HOLLAND, M.D. F.R.S.

&c. &c.

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**A. Strahan,
Printers-Street, London.**

P R E F A C E.

I OFFER this narrative of my travels in Greece with much diffidence to the Public, apprehensive that it may be thought that Greece has already been sufficiently explored by former writers. The Public has recently received valuable information from the works of Mr. Douglas and Mr. Hobhouse, respecting the character of the modern Greeks. I have carefully avoided the repetition of what they have told, and have refrained from all formal dissertation on the subjects of which they have treated ; but I have interwoven with my narrative various anecdotes and observations, which will, I hope, further illustrate the subject, and add some information relative to the present state of literature and cultivation in Greece.

Had I been previously aware that Major Leake intended to publish his “ Researches in Greece,” I should scarcely have had courage to commence my own work ; but having begun the narrative, I was led to persevere, from the consideration that it related principally to parts of that country as yet little known or described. I think it fortunate that I had directed my views more particularly to such

districts, though they may not have so many claims as others on the attention of the classical reader. The interest which the world now takes in Greece, refers not merely to ancient times, but regards also the future condition of a people who are again resuming a national character, and whom time and political changes may again raise to perfect independence.

I shall conduct the reader through the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, and some parts of Macedonia, sketching afterwards more rapidly my route through the southern parts of Greece, and finally describing the second journey I made through the dominions of Ali Pasha. I have dwelt particularly on the government and extraordinary character of this modern ruler of Albania, with which I had peculiar opportunities of becoming acquainted.

While I have selected for description those parts of Greece which are least generally known, I have endeavoured to convey a full idea of the scenery of the country, and of whatever remains of antiquity are scattered over its surface. I might further have enlarged on the subject of these antiquities, by citing additional authorities, and quoting discordant opinions, but I have forborne such discussions, aware that they can have little interest for the generality of readers. Upon the most correct information that I could collect I have given the population of the country; and, considering that the mineralogy and other parts of the natural history of Greece are yet only partially known, I have been anxious to obtain and to communicate information on these subjects. The results which I have presented may at least assist in giving a useful direction to future observations.

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I had intended to have inserted in the Appendix a memoir on the principal diseases, and on the state of medicine in Greece; but this may be placed more properly in some publication better adapted to the circulation of medical facts.

A preface filled with apologies is an acknowledgment of faults, which a man coolly determines to commit. I shall not, therefore, attempt to excuse the want of a good map, by pleading the loss of my actual surveys, and of a considerable part of my journal. Whatever I have left untold will soon come before the Public from more fortunate, and more enlightened travellers than myself. From the hands of Major Leake, and Sir W. Gell, maps may be expected far superior to any thing which I could have offered, had my papers been preserved.

I shall detain the reader no longer than to assure him, that among the many deficiencies he must find in the following pages, he will have no just cause to accuse the author of want of fidelity.

ROME,
31st of October, 1814.

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