# INTRODUCTION

George Grey (1809–1891, hereafter 'Grey') was the eleventh child and fifth son of Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (1776–1845),[1] and his wife Mary, Countess Grey (*née* Ponsonby, 1776–1861).[2] As he describes in the memoir of his life, the first part of this volume, Grey was educated at Richmond School in Yorkshire, from where the Greek scholar James Tate (1771–1843)[3] sent his 'Invincible' students to the universities. At the age of thirteen in 1822, with his eldest brother Henry (1802–1894)[4] to inherit the earldom and his second brother Charles (1804–1870)[5] having joined the Army, Grey followed his third brother Frederick (1805–1878)[6] into the Royal Navy, which offered an affordable career in which the brothers' connections would ensure swift advancement. Following a short period of

[1] Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, successively a Whig MP for Northumberland (1786–1800, 1801–1807), Appleby (1807), and Tavistock (1807), foreign secretary and leader of the House of Commons in the Ministry of All the Talents (1806–1807), and prime minister of the United Kingdom (1830–1834).

[2] Mary Elizabeth Grey, Countess Grey, the daughter of William Brabazon Ponsonby, 1st Baron Ponsonby (1744–1806), who was a Whig MP in the Parliament of Ireland for Cork City (1764–1776), Bandonbridge (1776–1783), Newtownards (1783), and County Kilkenny (1783–1801), the last of which he represented at Westminster (1801–1806). Ponsonby was a leading Irish advocate of Catholic emancipation.

[3] James Tate was headmaster of Richmond School from 1796 to 1833, when Grey's father appointed him canon of St Paul's Cathedral, London. Between 1812 and 1833, an average of six pupils went from Richmond to the universities each year; at Cambridge, their academic success earned them the nickname of 'Tate's Invincibles' and 13 of them became fellows of Trinity College.

[4] Henry Grey, 3rd Earl Grey, styled Viscount Howick from 1807 to 1834, was Whig MP for Winchelsea (1826–1830), Northumberland (1831–1832), North Northumberland (1832–1841), and Sunderland (1841–1845) before acceding to the earldom. He was a junior colonial minister in his father's government (1830–1833), when he was a prominent advocate for slave emancipation, then secretary at war under Melbourne (1835–1839) and a consequential colonial secretary under Russell (1846–1852).

[5] Charles Grey joined the Army as a second lieutenant and had been promoted to general by 1865. Elected a Whig MP for Wycombe at a by-election in 1832, when he beat a young Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), later 1st earl of Beaconsfield and Conservative prime minister (1868, 1874–1880), by 23 votes to 12. Charles Grey then served as private secretary to Prince Albert (1849–1861) and Queen Victoria (1861–1870).

[6] Frederick William Grey served in the First Opium and Crimean Wars, rose to become a full admiral (1865), and was first sea lord in the Palmerston and Russell ministries (1861–1866).

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tutelage under his uncle Sir George Grey (1767–1828)[7] at Portsmouth, Grey's earliest service at sea was in HMS *Forte* (1814)[8] then HMS *Jupiter* (1813),[9] which took William Pitt Amherst (1773–1857)[10] to Calcutta as the new governor-general of the presidency of Fort William. There followed diplomatic errands to Nova Scotia, Bermuda, Lisbon, and Rio de Janeiro before the most memorable service of Grey's young career aboard HMS *Talbot* (1824).[11]

Serving on the Mediterranean Station, Grey and the *Talbot* spent roughly a year protecting British and allied shipping from the depredations of Greek pirates in the eastern Mediterranean. Then, in the autumn of 1827, with the governments of Britain, France, and Russia resolving to intervene formally in the Greek War of Independence should the Ottomans refuse to concede Greek autonomy, the *Talbot* fell in with the allied fleet that was blockading Navarino Bay. With the Turkish commanders rebuffing the overtures of the British admiral and noted philhellene Sir Edward Codrington (1770–1851),[12] hostilities commenced at 2.00 pm on 20 October 1827, and so Grey saw action in the most decisive engagement of the conflict. His urgent, almost breathless account of the Battle of Navarino, written in the immediate aftermath to his father from the *Talbot* (**Letter 4**), is a vivid and brutal description of naval warfare in the age of sail: there were shattered bones, limbs lost, splinters flying, and 'entrails [laid] quite open' by Turkish shot; as Grey escaped harm, only 'covered in [someone else's] blood', the ships of the Ottoman fleet burned 'all that night and nearly the whole of' the next day.

Promoted to lieutenant in the ageing *Windsor Castle* (1790)[13] in 1829, Grey returned to the Mediterranean as British forces observed

[7] Sir George Grey, 1st Baronet Grey of Fallodon, was a younger brother of Grey's father. Having helped to capture Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St Lucia during the French wars, he commanded HMS *Victory* (1796–1797) and was commissioner at Portsmouth Dockyard from 1806 until his death.

[8] HMS *Forte*, a 38-gun frigate built at Woolwich.

[9] HMS *Jupiter*, a 50-gun fourth-rate ship later used as a troopship from 1837 and as a coal-hulk from 1846.

[10] Upon returning from an embassy to China (1816–1817), Amherst had stopped at St Helena, where his interview of Napoleon gave rise to the aphorism: 'Let China sleep; for when she wakes, she will shake the world.' While governor-general at Calcutta (1823–1828), Amherst oversaw the annexation of Assam and the First Burmese War.

[11] HMS *Talbot*, a sixth-rate frigate built at Pembroke, which, long after Grey's time on her, served as a depot ship on Edward Augustus Inglefield's (1820–1894) Arctic pursuit of the lost Franklin expedition.

[12] Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, a subscriber to the London Philhellenic Committee, commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Station (1826–1828), the heir to extensive Caribbean plantations, and MP for Devonport (1832–1839).

[13] HMS *Windsor Castle*, a second-rate ship of the line that was reduced from 98 to 74 guns in 1814.

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the denouement to the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829,[14] the emergence of an independent Greece,[15] and the installation of Prince Otto of Bavaria (1815–1867)[16] as monarch of that new nation. Promoted to commander of HMS *Scylla* (1809)[17] in September 1831 and HMS *Scout* (1832)[18] in December 1833, although none of the surviving papers concern his command of the latter ship, Grey spent much of the early 1830s between Malta and Tripoli, where he and the British consul Hanmer George Warrington (1776–1847)[19] sought to persuade the truculent bey, Yusuf Karamanli (1766–1832, r.1795–1832),[20] to honour his debts to Maltese merchants under British protection. At the same time, the Tory coalition at Westminster had splintered at last over the issue of Catholic Emancipation and, upon the duke of Wellington (1769–1852)[21] reaffirming his hostility to parliamentary reform, his government had fallen; this prompted William IV (1765–1837, r.1830–1837) to invite Grey's father to form a minority Whig government in which several members of his extended family would hold office.

A further promotion to post-rank came in 1834 and, by 1835, Grey had his first major command, of the newly launched HMS *Cleopatra* (1835).[22] Following a brief but eventful voyage in late 1835 to St Petersburg – where his sister Louisa (1797–1841) and

[14] In response to Russian engagement at Navarino, Sultan Mahmud II (1785–1839, r.1808–1839) had closed the Dardanelles to Russian ships in contravention of the 1826 Akkerman Convention, prompting the declaration of war.

[15] The United Kingdom, France, and Russia recognized Greek independence through the London Protocol of 1830.

[16] Otto of Greece, the second son of Ludwig I of Bavaria (1786–1868, r.1825–1848), whose great quality in allied eyes was that, as a member of the house of Wittelsbach, he had no claim to any other major European throne.

[17] HMS *Scylla*, built at Topsham, an 18-gun *Cruizer*-class sloop and the subject of a painting by Nicholas Matthews Condy (1818–1851).

[18] HMS *Scout*, an 18-gun sloop built at Chatham.

[19] Hanmer George Warrington, a lieutenant-colonel during the Peninsular War and British consul at Tripoli (1814–1846). By coincidence, he features in a recent volume in the present series, *Letters and Reports of British Consular and Diplomatic Agents in Tripoli, 1793–1832*, ed. Sara El Gaddari (Cambridge, 2020) (*Tripoli Letters*).

[20] Yusuf Karamanli became pasha of Tripoli following the civil war of 1793–1795, lost the Barbary Wars to the United States, and massacred thousands of the al-Jawazi people at Benghazi in 1817.

[21] Despite calls for parliamentary reform and losing seats in the general election of 1830, Wellington told the House of Lords that he would 'always feel it his duty to resist such measures' (*Hansard*, Lords, 2 November 1830, 3rd ser., vol. 1, cc. 11–53 at c. 53). When his government then lost a symbolically important vote on the Civil List, he resigned 'at an hour's notice', obliging the king to summon Grey.

[22] HMS *Cleopatra*, built at Pembroke, was a 26-gun sixth-rate *Vestal*-class frigate; Grey took command of her on 12 August 1835.

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her family were to join John Lambton, 1st earl of Durham (1792–1840),[23] in his ministry to the Russian court – Grey spent most of the next three years in the southern hemisphere. Using three notebooks to make a journal of his activities every few weeks or months, Grey hounded slavers in the south Atlantic, surveyed and explored the Falkland Islands, and dropped anchor at almost every major port on both sides of South America. At Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Valparaiso (from which he travelled to Santiago), Callao (from which he travelled to Lima), Guayaquil, and Mazatlán, he conversed with British diplomats and merchants, attended to local dignitaries, and explored local society with the help of the Spanish vocabulary that he learned on the way.

Upon returning to shore in late 1838 there was no further command for Grey, at least not yet. Instead, he holidayed on half-pay at Pau in the south of France or waited restively at home at Howick for a new berth that he feared, if not forthcoming before Melbourne's Whigs left office in the summer of 1841,[24] might never come at all from Robert Peel's Conservatives [**Diary, 10–27 August 1841**].[25] Yet only three days before Grey's allies left the Admiralty, he received the command of HMS *Belvidera* (1809)[26] on the Mediterranean station and, for the next four years, he cruised between many of the great southern ports of Europe. He saw Spanish government forces bombard Barcelona from Montjuïc; he ferried Britons of eminence along the rivieras; and he visited old friends in Greece, Tripoli, and Tunis. Most important of all, he met Jane Frances Stuart (1822–1892), the younger daughter of Sir Patrick Stuart (1777–1855), then-governor of Malta.[27] They married on the island in January 1845, honeymooned in Savoy and

[23] John Lambton, 1st earl of Durham, known as 'Radical Jack', played a key role in passing the Reform Act 1832 and had been lord privy seal in the Grey ministry. He was British ambassador to Russia (1835–1837) and later authored the *Report on the Affairs of British North America* (1839), a foundational document of Canadian self-government. He married Louisa Elizabeth Grey in 1816.

[24] William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne (1779–1848), who briefly succeeded Grey's father as prime minister (July–November 1834) before returning to office (1835–1841).

[25] The Tories, refashioned as the Conservative Party by Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), had won 367 seats at the general election of 1841.

[26] HMS *Belvidera*, built at Deptford, a 36-gun fifth-rate frigate which took extensive American prizes during the War of 1812 before undertaking cruises in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. She served as a receiving ship at Portsmouth between 1852 and 1890.

[27] General Sir Patrick Stuart, formerly commander-in-chief of the Army in Scotland (1830–1837), was governor of Edinburgh Castle (1836–1837) before his appointment as governor of Malta (1843–1847).

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Switzerland, and between 1846 and 1866 had twelve children, all but two living to adulthood.

The last two major appointments of Grey's life, but which this volume does not cover in detail because Grey did not write about them, were in 1846 and 1858. First, he became captain of the dockyard at Gibraltar and, within weeks of arriving there, had assumed responsibility for its naval stores as well. In the views of Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons (1790–1858)[28] and Lord Raglan (1788–1855),[29] the commander-in-chief of British forces during the Crimean War, Grey's 'exertions for the improvement of Gibraltar as a Naval Station' were 'of incalculable benefit to Her Majesty's Service' during that conflict by helping to expedite 'the transit of the requirements of the Crimean Expedition to which [they] were indebted for very opportune arrivals of men, ammunition and stores at critical moments' (**Letter 47**).

Promoted to rear-admiral in 1856, Grey succeeded William Fanshawe Martin (1801–1895)[30] as admiral-superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard in 1858. Taking HMS *St Vincent* (1815)[31] then HMS *Illustrious* (1803)[32] and HMS *Asia* (1824)[33] as his flagships, Grey was promoted to vice-admiral in 1863, leaving Portsmouth that year, and to full admiral in retirement in 1867. Taking a Greenwich Hospital pension of £150 per year (more than £14,500 in today's money),[34] Grey retired to the estate of his wife's family, Eaglescairnie, some 15 miles to the east of Edinburgh. He enjoyed good health in his later years and died in 1891 at the age of eighty-two; his wife, Jane, survived him by just over a year.

[28] Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, 1st Baron Lyons, first met Grey on the Mediterranean Station during his command of HMS *Blonde* (1819), a 46-gun fifth-rate frigate which had previously explored the south Pacific and the Hawaiian Islands. Lyons served as British ambassador to Switzerland (1849–1851) and was commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet (1854–1858) during the Crimean War.

[29] FitzRoy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan, of Alma glory and Balaclava infamy.

[30] Sir William Fanshawe Martin, 4th baronet, who, like Grey, had served on the South America Station, having protected British commerce during the Peruvian War of Independence.

[31] HMS *St Vincent*, built at Devonport, was a 120-gun first-rate ship that was flagship at Portsmouth, then of the Channel Fleet, before serving as a training ship from 1862 until her breaking up in 1905.

[32] HMS *Illustrious*, a 74-gun third-rate ship built at Rotherhithe which saw action at the Basque Roads (1809) and Java (1811), refitted at Portsmouth before the end of the French wars before serving as a guard ship, a hospital ship, and then as a gunnery training ship at Portsmouth.

[33] HMS *Asia*, built at Bombay, was a 74-gun second-rate ship of the line and British flagship at Navarino.

[34] *The Times*, 8 October 1891.

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It is fair to say that historians have paid little attention to Grey. In the three major biographies of his father, he is largely absent: in the earliest, Trevelyan does not mention him at all;[35] in the most recent, John W. Derry is equally silent;[36] and E.A. Smith notes only that Grey 'like Frederick was to become an Admiral'.[37] Even in histories of the Royal Navy, references to Grey are fleeting and often unflattering. Bruce Collins counts Grey among the 'lucky aristocratic few' who were 'promoted after being commissioned as lieutenants only since 1829' and mistakes him as the prime minister's grandson.[38] Elsewhere, Stanley Bonnett scorns that an older Grey, from whom the naval officer Cowper Phipps Coles (1819–1870)[39] sought favour and patronage, 'did not look like Nelson and was merely superintendent of Portsmouth dockyard'.[40]

Grey appears more frequently in primary source collections relating to the early period of his service. In his father's correspondence with Princess Lieven (1785–1857),[41] the earl is in 'great anxiety about the *Cleopatra* and its precious cargo' during Grey's first voyage to St Petersburg.[42] The *Cleopatra*'s subsequent service on the South America Station means that Grey appears in Abraham Nasatir's formidable documentation of British naval and diplomatic activity in the Pacific.[43] Two letters from that ship, written shortly after Grey's first encounter with a slaver off Cape Verde, feature in the collected papers of Rear-Admiral Sir William Symonds (1782–1856),[44] while Robert FitzRoy's (1805–1865) account of the second voyage of HMS *Beagle* refers to Grey's time on the Falkland Islands and his

[35] G.M. Trevelyan, *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill: Being the life of Charles, second Earl Grey* (London, 1920).

[36] John W. Derry, *Charles, Earl Grey: Aristocratic reformer* (Oxford, 1992).

[37] E.A. Smith, *Lord Grey, 1764–1845* (Oxford, 1990), 137.

[38] Bruce Collins, *War and Empire: The expansion of Britain, 1790–1830* (Oxford, 2014), 434.

[39] Cower Phipps Coles saw action at Taganrog during the Crimean War and patented a design for a revolving gun turret; he died when HMS *Captain* (1867), an experimental ship of his own design, went down off Cape Finisterre.

[40] Stanley Bonnett, *The Price of Admiralty: An indictment of the Royal Navy, 1805–1966* (London, 1968), 112.

[41] Dorothea, Princess Lieven, the wife of Prince Christoph von Lieven (1774–1839), who was Russian minister to the United Kingdom (1812–1834). She developed friendships with numerous statesmen – Palmerston, Castlereagh, Metternich, and Guizot among them – and so her correspondence endures as a remarkable source for historians.

[42] Earl Grey to Princess Lieven, 12 October 1835, in *Correspondence of Princess Lieven and Earl Grey*, ed. Guy le Strange, 3 vols (London, 1890), III, 135.

[43] A.P. Nasatir (ed.), *British Activities in California and the Pacific Coast of North America to 1860: An archival calendar guide (BACPC)* (San Diego, 1990), 233, 726, 931.

[44] *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Rear-Admiral Sir William Symonds*, ed. James A. Sharp (London, 1858), 545–547.

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opinion that 'the milk and butter at Howick was not superior to that which he tasted at the Falklands'.[45]

To focus on this relatively minor presence in the literature, however, would be to obscure the value of Grey's papers and the several ways in which they can illuminate important dimensions of nineteenth-century British political, naval, and diplomatic history.

In the first instance, Grey's recollections of the period 1829–1834 and his mother's letters from those years (**esp. Letters 10–22**) suggest and confirm a number of points about the activity, opinions, and priorities of the Grey ministry: that the Whigs regarded their 'wretched' and 'lamentable' opposition with real contempt (**Letter 10**); that the Greys believed 'the people [would] never abandon' the cause of Reform; that Tory machinations would 'not defeat the measure in the end' (**Letter 11**) and that the Bill 'never can be … abandoned' (**Letter 12**); that the Greys believed the Tories would risk civil war or revolution in the spring of 1832 in preference to the enactment of Reform (**Letter 13**); that the government was truly unaware, or at least had heard only rumours, of Wellington's letter to his allies urging abstention from the ultimate vote on the Bill (**Letters 14–15**); and that in the summer of 1833 Grey was apparently more concerned about the passage of the Church Temporalities Bill than the Slavery Abolition Bill (**Letter 21**). Sadly, the identity of the MP whom the whips had raised from his sickbed for the second reading of the first Reform Bill, the 'man with leeches actual on his head' (**Letter 10**), remains a mystery.

As for internal Whig politics after the earl's resignation in 1834, the Greys' disdain for Melbourne, Lord John Russell (1792–1878),[46] and Lord Palmerston (1784–1865)[47] is no secret, but the strength of feeling in Grey himself, a sailor with extremely limited experience of high politics, is instructive. He writes from Buenos Aires in dismay at Melbourne's alliance with O'Connell and the Radicals: 'It certainly is a very, very different Governm't to that of my Father's', he tells his brother Charles, 'and those members of it

[45] Robert FitzRoy, the grandson of the prime minister Augustus FitzRoy, 3rd duke of Grafton (1735–1811), was captain of HMS *Beagle* (1820) during its voyage and circumnavigation of 1831–1836, during which Charles Darwin (1809–1881), who served as the ship's naturalist, collected much of the evidence which informed his theory of natural selection. Grey is mentioned in *Proceedings of the Second Expedition, 1831–1836, under the Command of Captain Robert FitzRoy, R.N.* (London, 1839), 264.

[46] John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, successively home secretary (1835–1839), colonial secretary (1839–1841, 1855), prime minister (1846–1852, 1865–1866), and foreign secretary (1859–1865).

[47] Henry Temple, 3rd viscount Palmerston, the long-serving Whig and Liberal foreign secretary (1830–1841, 1846–1851) and prime minister (1855–1858, 1859–1865).

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who had the luck to act with him ought to be ashamed of their subscriptions and truckling to the Radicals' (**Letter 25**). Grey meanwhile grimaces that Reform 'is often placed to the credit of … Russell' even though his father 'alone could have carried' (**Memoir, p. 49**) the Bill, and his brother Henry execrates Russell for his conduct at Vienna towards the end of the Crimean War (**Letter 46**). As for Palmerston, Grey ridicules his policy on the Carlist War (**Memoir, p. 53**) and resents that he, as foreign secretary, took the credit for preventing war over Belgium in 1831–1832 (**Memoir, p. 50**), although this grievance is misconceived since it really was Palmerston who directed British diplomacy during that crisis. Even so, such comments reflect recurrent themes in these papers: that subsequent Whigs and Liberals were insufficiently grateful to the earl who had brought them in from the cold, 'his health never given at any public meeting, his name never mentioned' (**Letter 27**); and that whatever the travails of the day, had the earl's 'Gov't not been broken up, he never would have suffered it to come to this' (**Letter 31**).

In respect of Grey's professional activities, his memoir exhibits some of the nostalgia for the age of sail that Max Jones has noted in the age of the *Dreadnought*:[48] 'To those who were fortunate enough to have interest and to advance rapidly in the profession', he writes in the 1870s, 'it was one of great power & independence … The romance of the sea service is at an end' (**Memoir, p. 41**). For the most part, however, Grey welcomed the reform and improvement of the naval service. He regrets that, in the 1820s, 'discipline was always relaxed and drunkenness & riot with few exceptions was the rule', that 'a sailor was considered a sort of wild animal to be picked up after his drunken frolic on shore', and that 'Captains of the old [French] war [had] no other idea of how to maintain order and discipline' than by vicious flogging (**Memoir, pp. 40, 21**). Rather, Grey preferred that 'now the men are brought up as boys in the service – enter for a certain time – get pay monthly' and are 'treated with kindness and as rational beings' (**Memoir, p. 25**). He was, in other words, an advocate of professionalism in the Victorian Navy, a position which, in spite of the favour that he concedes he was shown in his younger years, is expressed most clearly in his diary entry for 9 September 1849; moreover, given Grey's increasingly religious reading in the 1840s, these papers may serve to reinforce Richard Blake's argument that 'piety' went

[48] Max Jones, '"The surest safeguard of peace": Technology, the Navy and the nation in boys' papers, *c.*1905–1907', in *The Dreadnought and the Edwardian Age*, ed. Andrew Lambert, Robert Blyth, and Jan Rüger (Farnham, 2011), 95–109.

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hand-in-hand with the development of naval professionalism in this period.[49]

Grey's career also underlines how peaceful the *Pax Britannica* could be. In command of the *Cleopatra*, Grey surveyed and explored; in the *Belvidera*, he darted about the Mediterranean, reading voraciously, frequently bored, and often enduring feelings of isolation and depression. And though the *Belvidera* held target practice off the coast of Catalonia, and the *Windsor Castle* off Mytilene, Grey's ships appear to have fired only a few shots in anger after Navarino: at Egyptian corvettes in 1828 and the slaver that he chased down off Cape Verde in December 1835 (**Journal, pp. 39, 82**). Even this prosecution of the slave trade was, in Grey's experience, frustratingly circumscribed by the limitations of the treaties then in force.[50] By the tenth article of the 1817 treaty between Britain and Spain, for instance, British ships had been forbidden from detaining Spanish ships unless they had 'Slaves actually on board', and it was not until December 1822 that an explanatory article permitted detention and seizure if there was 'clear and undeniable Proof that a Slave or Slaves has or have been put on board a Vessel, for the Purpose of illegal Traffic'. It was another thirteen years, however, before the 'equipment clause' of June 1835 provided that discovering the paraphernalia of the slave trade – what Grey describes as 'irons, water-butts, slave decks' (**Memoir, p. 83**) – was sufficient to condemn any such ship as a slaver. Jake Subryan Richards and Fabian Klose have recently considered the limits of abolitionism in the south Atlantic before the later nineteenth century, and these papers reflect those limits.[51] Indeed, Grey fumed at 'the ignorance at home' about the persistence of the Brazilian slave trade and the supine judicial processes of the mixed commission courts, that British forces were incapable of giving 'a greater check to the trade', and that a French diplomat could ask sarcastically whether British abolitionism was a cynical means of throwing 'obstacles in the way of the Brazilian sugar and coffee trade in order to pay for our own West Indian Colonies' (**Journal, pp. 132–133**).

[49] Richard Blake, *Religion in the British Navy, 1815–1879: Piety and professionalism* (Woodbridge, 2014).

[50] See Mary Wills, *Envoys of Abolition: British naval officers and the campaign against the slave trade in West Africa* (Liverpool, 2019).

[51] Jake Subryan Richards, 'Anti-slave-trade law, "liberated Africans" and the state in the South Atlantic world, *c.*1839–1852', *Past & Present*, 241 (2018), 179–219 and 'The adjudication of slave ship captures, coercive intervention, and value exchange in comparative Atlantic perspective, ca. 1839–1870', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 62 (2020), 836–867; Fabian Klose, *In the Cause of Humanity: A history of intervention in the long nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 2021), 102–134. Joe Mulhern will address the same themes in *British Entanglement in Brazilian Slavery: Masters in another empire, c.1822–1888* (London, 2025).

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Instead, the great importance of mid-nineteenth-century naval commands lay in the quasi-diplomatic responsibilities that officers assumed. Of course, this was not new to the period after 1815. During the Napoleonic Wars, Vice-Admiral Sir James Saumarez (1757–1836)[52] had acted as an 'armed diplomat' in the Baltic; at the same time, Cuthbert Collingwood (1748–1810)[53] 'effectively policed the seas between Cadiz, Cairo, and Constantinople, again melding political and diplomatic functions'.[54] There is no question that Grey and his fellow officers played a similar role, first in South America in the *Cleopatra* then in the Mediterranean in the *Belvidera*. At Buenos Aires, for instance, Grey remarks that only 'constant threats' and 'the presence of a man-of-war' kept British merchants safe from the tyranny of the Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793–1877).[55] Along the Pacific coastline, the *Cleopatra* collected the specie that South American merchants and governments owed to British suppliers and investors; in the wake of the British 'mania' for Latin American bonds in the 1820s and the consequent Panic of 1825, this was essential business. At other places, the company that Grey kept in port was extraordinary. At Callao and Lima, he dines with Andrés de Santa Cruz (1792–1865),[56] the president of Bolivia and the Supreme Protector of the Peru-Bolivian Confederation; accordingly, Grey observes the ongoing War of the Confederation (1836–1839) that Santa Cruz would lose to the allied forces of Argentina, Chile, and Peruvian separatists. At Turin, he is the guest of Victor Emmanuel (1820–1878), later the first king of Italy, and at Athens of Otto, king of Greece; at other times he befriends the Polish adventurer Pawel de Strzelecki (1797–1873)[57] and dances on deck with the socialist author Flora Tristan

[52] Admiral James Saumarez, 1st Baron de Saumarez, who served almost throughout the French wars before becoming commander-in-chief at Plymouth (1824–1827).

[53] Vice-admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, 1st Baron Collingwood, who succeeded Horatio Nelson (1758–1805) as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet (1805–1810).

[54] Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783–1846* (Oxford, 2006), 225.

[55] Juan Manuel de Rosas, the (putatively) Federalist soldier and politician who was long-term governor of Buenos Aires and effectively dictator of Argentina (1829–1832, 1835–1852).

[56] Santa Cruz, whilst president of Bolivia, had forged a confederation between Bolivia and Peru, proclaiming himself 'Supreme Protector' of the '*Confederación Perú-Boliviana*'.

[57] A nobleman from near Poznan (then Posen in Prussia), Strelecki was a courier during the failed Polish rebellion against the Russians in 1830, then left Europe for the Americas. Later a geologist and geographer of Australia and New Zealand, he returned to Europe in 1843 and naturalized as a British subject in 1845, after which he played a key role in the charity that the British Relief Association addressed to Ireland during the Great Famine.

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(1803–1844).[58] Grey was acutely aware of his ambassadorial duties and despaired, at Valparaiso and Rio de Janeiro, that his fellow officers did not make better efforts with 'native society'.

That being said, there is little to separate Grey's opinions on the history and character of the new South American republics from the pessimism that often prevailed in the nineteenth century. Whilst investors of the 1820s had looked to South America for colossal returns, the collapse of agriculture and mining – combined with the endemic instability of the continent's politics – had persuaded many observers that the former subjects of the Spanish Empire were not yet fit for freedom. In his potted histories of Argentina, Chile, and Peru, Grey certainly gives voice to the Black Legend: to the idea that 'the great aim of the authorities, acting under instructions from Madrid, was to keep the people in the most abject state of ignorance', and that the Spanish colonists were creatures of Jesuitical vice (**Journal, p. 153**). Even when he explores the history of Mexico in greater detail, Grey insists that the Mexican people require 'a Dictator to rule them with a rod of iron' and that Agustin I's (1873–1824, r.1823–1824) only chance of asserting control over his new 'empire' was to have acted 'with decision & energy, abdicating the empty title of Emperor and taken that of Dictator' (**Journal, p. 189**). The greater significance of Grey's history of Mexico (**Journal, pp. 180–198**) may lie in its novelty. Written from Spanish sources, it is one of the earliest and fullest histories of independent Mexico by an Englishman: even if Nicholas Mill's *The History of Mexico from the Spanish Conquest to the Present Era* (1824) predates Grey's visit to Mexico, as does Henry George Ward's (1797–1860) *Mexico in 1827* (1828),[59] Grey accounts for more of Mexican history and, in doing so, refers extensively and perhaps uniquely to Lorenzo de Zavala's (1788–1836) Spanish-language history of the same.[60]

If Grey was pessimistic as to the prospects of South America, he and his correspondents also provide striking examples of the Russophobia that animated so much of British foreign policy after

[58] The French-Peruvian writer who, on leaving Peru for Europe, published several works of socialist and feminist thought, such as *L'Union Ouvrière* (1843). Tristan was also the grandmother of Paul Gauguin (1848–1903).

[59] Ward was the first British charge d'affaires to Mexico. Grey refers to and criticizes his work (see **Journal, p. 191**).

[60] A politician and diplomat who helped to draft Mexico's republican constitution of 1824, Zavala played a key role in founding the Republic of Texas. His *Ensayo Histórico de las Revoluciones de Mégico, desde 1808 hasta 1830*, 2 vols (Paris, 1831–1832) was neither translated into English nor published in the United Kingdom.

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1814, which Mark B. Smith has termed 'the Russia anxiety'.[61] On a basic level, Grey scorns the Russian people and their culture: departing Kronstadt in October 1835, he credits St Petersburg as 'magnificent and wonderful' in light of its rapid development, but despises almost everything else. He regrets that 'all is forced', that 'all are slaves', and that 'a plated barbarity' informs the Russian character; and though he might regard the military academies as 'admirably conducted', he concludes that 'there is nothing [in Russia] that I look back [upon] with pleasure; people, country and climate are all equally detestable to me' (**Journal, p. 77**). This was not an isolated outburst, for elsewhere Grey reflects upon the 'stupid policy in joining Russia at Navarino' (**Memoir, p. 44**) and remarks while at Mazatlán that 'one ought not to believe any Russian' (**Journal, p. 174**). Yet if these tropes of duplicity, slavishness, and aggression are commonplace in the nineteenth-century British attitudes towards Russia that Anthony Cross[62] has excavated, Grey did change his mind. He later rues 'our unreasoning fear of Russia' and concludes that 'the freedom of Greece with Russian co-operation was a good work' (**Memoir, pp. 58, 45**). Perhaps it was the display of Russian impotence during the Crimean War that disabused him of these fears; perhaps it was the exchange with his brother Henry in July 1855 (**Letter 46**), where the latter rubbished the Russian naval threat to Britain and expressed a decided preference for Orthodox 'civilisation' over Ottoman barbarism, that persuaded Grey. In any event, by 1876 he hopes sincerely that 'jealousy' of Russia should not prevent the peaceful solution of the enduring Eastern Question.

When it came to the Falkland Islands, however, Grey was more optimistic. When he and the *Cleopatra* surveyed the Falklands between November 1836 and February 1837, British sovereignty over the islands had been secure for less than four years. And with multiple expeditions – British, French, Spanish, and Argentine – having failed to make good the settlement of the islands, and with the British Empire expanding rapidly in other places which appeared more hospitable, such as South Africa and Australia, the Admiralty and the Colonial Office needed to know: were the Falkland Islands worth the effort and expense of colonization? Some visitors had been hopeful of the prospects, with Charles Darwin noting in March 1833 that '[t]he island is abundantly stocked with animals … European vegetables will grow. And as there is an abundance of water & good

[61] Mark B. Smith, *The Russia Anxiety: And how history can resolve it* (London, 2019).
[62] Anthony Cross (ed.), *A People Passing Rude: British responses to Russian culture* (Cambridge, 2012).

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anchorage, it is most surprising that it has not been long ago colonized'.[63] Grey was even more emphatic in his approval and, in his journal entry for February 1837 (**Journal, pp. 123–128**), he contemplates the Falklands as 'a desirable point for a Naval Station' and 'a place of refuge for vessels in those stormy latitudes'. He imagines a 'thriving colony' possessed of 'one of the finest Harbours in the world', profitable fisheries, supplies of fresh beef, and hillside plots of 'potatoes, cabbage, turnips and carrots'. Whatever challenge the climate might present, it was nothing compared to the sufferings of 'your fishermen on the Northern coast of England and Scotland as well as your Irish peasant'. As Barry M. Gough has suggested, Grey's report to the Admiralty was an important exposition of the advantages that the Falklands might offer, and a compelling example of how prescient naval surveys could inform the expansion of the empire.[64]

[63] *Charles Darwin's 'Beagle' Diary*, ed. R.D. Keynes (Cambridge, 2001), 134.

[64] Barry M. Gough, 'The British reoccupation and colonization of the Falkland Islands, or Malvinas, 1832–1843', *Albion*, 22 (1990), 261–287, at 274–275.

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