

Daniel Vivian's Grand Tour, 1636-37 (New College, MS 348)

In late 1636 a young New College fellow named Daniel Vivian was given leave by the college to travel abroad for a year. This was an unusual but not unknown academic digression: Sir Thomas Bodley, for instance, with the permission of Merton College spent the last four years of the 1570s on the continent, in France, Italy, and Germany; and when Wadham was founded in 1610, the statutes allowed fellows leave on half pay for foreign travel. But instances from New College are very rare, and Vivian's is the only journey we can reconstruct vividly. Vivian's own path took him as far as Venice and back, taking a route across the south of France, Italy, and then back over the Alps to Paris. We know in granular detail about this early version of the 'Grand Tour' because Vivian kept careful notes on every single place he visited, and then wrote these up as an extended, literary prose narrative of 350 quarto pages, preserved in his own calligraphic manuscript, complete with a sheaf of commendatory poems by his friends tipped into the front of his manuscript. It was, however, never published.

This travel narrative is almost¹ unknown to modern scholarship because the manuscript, now New College MS 348, was purchased by the college in 1849, after the work for the last published catalogue of our manuscripts had been completed (this is the 'Coxe' catalogue of Oxford college manuscripts, finally published in 1852). So although Vivian's account has been sitting quietly in the college for almost seventeen decades, as it is unlisted in any published account it has in practice been invisible to those who do not read the typescript or handwritten continuations for 'post-Coxe' college accessions. This note therefore reintroduces Vivian to modern readers, and offers a brief tour of his travel journal, titled by him 'A Voyage begun from Bristow December the first 1636'. Vivian's journal must be one of the most detailed travel accounts to survive from the period, although it is not quite as exhaustive as the narrative of Philip Skippon, who travelled abroad with friends including the naturalists John Ray and Francis Willughby in 1663-64; his account was only published in 1732.²

What little we know of Daniel Vivian does not present the most pleasant of pictures. He is best known for his later career, and specifically for causing trouble with the Parliamentary Visitors when they came to Oxford in 1648 in order to 'reform and regulate' what had been a strongly Royalist institution. Among the colleges New College was hit hard: of the seventy fellows, to consider only that category of college member, fully fifty were thrown out.

Not so Daniel Vivian. Claiming Founder's Kin,³ he had been a fellow since 1633, and had taken his BCL in 1639 and his DCL in 1642. On 8 May 1648, the fellows of New College were summoned to the warden's lodgings in Magdalen to state whether they would submit to the Visitors or no; by this date Vivian was second in seniority on the college roll. Amidst a sea of principled rejection, Vivian on his perfidious bark replied: 'I submit'. He was the only one to do so, and it is excruciating to read the pages of principled defiance following Vivian's brief capitulation. In mid 1649 he is then found accusing two fellows of the college of disloyalty to the Parliament, an accusation even the Visitors themselves dismissed. Vivian then went to Ireland in the service of General Fleetwood, but complained that he wasn't being paid his proper salary by the college. His troubles rumble

¹ 'Almost'—see Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London, 1998), p. 359, n. 57, a note evidently added late, after G. E. Aylmer had pointed out the manuscript to Chaney.

² For this journey and some useful discussion of the *ars apodemica* or travel advice literature, see Mark Greengrass, Daisy Hildyard, Christopher D. Preston, and Paul J. Smith, 'Science on the Move: Francis Willughby's Expeditions' in *Virtuoso by Nature: The Scientific Worlds of Francis Willughby FRS (1635–1672)*, ed. by Tim Birkhead (Leiden, 2016).

³ This is slightly odd, as the overwhelming majority of Vivians in the period listed in the *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714*, ed. by Joseph Foster (Oxford, 1891), attended Exeter College.

on in the register of the Parliamentary Visitors, but they in turn eventually found Vivian to be guilty of 'many misdemeanours and miscarriages', and expelled him from his fellowship.⁴ He appealed to the Chancellor's Court, but nothing appears to have come of this.⁵

Despite all this noise, Blair Worden has suspected that Vivian, 'an expertly cantankerous Fellow', may have been a secret royalist agent.⁶ There may be truth in this, as after the Restoration Vivian received a testimonial to the effect that he was 'an honest and orthodox man, of sober life and conversation, rightly principled in matters touching church government', an astonishing claim for a man who had apparently served with Fleetwood. Vivian petitioned Charles II for the Prebend of Norwell Palishall in Southwell Minster, claiming that he had in fact been an army chaplain under the late king, running great risks in the conveyance of letters, and was a severe sufferer in the cause. His petition was subscribed by George Morley, then Bishop of Worcester, and it was evidently granted, as Vivian held his desired prebend from 1660 to 1670. It seems unlikely that a genuine Parliamentarian snitch could have managed to reinvent himself quite so successfully had he not had some now invisible royalist interest. Vivian died in that year, at Farndish in Bedfordshire, where he had been rector since 1652; he was succeeded in his prebend by Samuel Leek in October of the same year.⁷

Of Vivian's earlier life in New College in more peaceful times we know little. He wrote some poetry, for example the verse prefaced to 'G. A.'s now extremely rare *Pallas Armata* (London, 1639), a treatise on swordsmanship ('Thanks Mathematick Fencer, that dost tye / The Sword to th'booke and fight in Geometry ...').⁸ Some verse addressed to him also survives in a manuscript miscellany in the library of Corpus Christi College.⁹

We can also get a sense of Vivian's friendship group from the poems he set before his 'Voyage begun from Bristow', all seemingly autograph items, collected by Vivian and inserted as extra leaves at the front of his account. The first poem is in French, and the author's signature is somewhat damaged; I shall return to this problem shortly. Also damaged, the last poem is currently unattributable.¹⁰ But the rest of the poets are easily identifiable. The second poem in the volume is by Henry J'Anson (sic!), a lawyer of Balliol and All Souls, and a man who was entrusted with delivering the money the university lent to Charles I. He fought as a Royalist officer, and subsequently claimed that he had then been created a baronet by Charles I; after the regicide he fled overseas and turned Roman Catholic. One of his published works is poetical, *Jonas redux* (1672), in parallel Latin and English verse.¹¹ Several of the other poems are by young dons from other colleges, John

⁴ Anthony Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses*, ed. by Philip Bliss (London, 1813), vol. 2, col. 43; *Register of the Visitors of the University of Oxford, 1647-1658*, ed. by Montagu Burrows (London, 1881); *Alumni Oxonienses*, s.n.

⁵ There is a (probably autograph) fragment of his appeal in Oxford University Archives, WPγ/19/18/12, being the conclusion, obviously torn from the larger document, which may just have been used as scrap paper.

⁶ Worden, *God's Instruments*, pp. 145-46, and see p. 187 too.

⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*, Charles II, under 28 August 1660; Boshier, *Settlement*, pp. 159-60; John Le Neve, rev. T. Duffus Hardy, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1854), vol. 3, p. 442.

⁸ Among the other poets supplying verse to this volume are William Bewe and John Godolphin, who both contributed verse to Vivian's own manuscript (see below).

⁹ 'To his worthy friend, Mr. Daniel Vivian' by J. W., in Corpus Christi College (Oxford) MS 176, fol. 27, not consulted. Noted, with the verse to Godolphin John, in George Clement Boase, *Bibliotheca Cornubiensis*, 3 vols (London, 1874, 1882), vol. 2, p. 828, and also in Coxe, *Catalogus codicum MSS qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1852), vol. 2, p. 71.

¹⁰ Visible is 'Wil. Wiccham', presumably the start of a Wykehamist formula, but name under that, almost entirely effaced, is the author, possibly 'E. All[...].jck No[v.]', or 'E. All. [Col]l No[v.]'. We may note that the final poem prefaced to 'G. A.'s *Pallas Armata* (London, 1639) is signed 'W. W. Oxoniensis'.

¹¹ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. by Philip Bliss (London, 1813), vol. 4, cols. 138-39; Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, s.n.

Swaine of Pembroke, John Godolphin of Gloucester Hall, and John Hyfield of St John's. Vivian's New College friends supplying poems were John Beesly and Gilbert Coles, both men who would later be expelled by the Visitors on the occasion when Vivian himself submitted. Two poems, in Latin and then in English, were also presented by the fascinating William Bewe (1616–1706) of New College, also expelled by the Visitors. In the civil war period he served as a soldier at home, and then a secret agent abroad, and finally a mercenary in the Swedish army, losing a finger somewhere along the way. He ultimately became bishop of Llandaff in 1679, through the unlikely patronage of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.¹²

What of the French poem? The text is somewhat damaged, but it is addressed '[a m]on [...] Monsieur Da[niel Vivian]', and is signed 'John De[...] | Equitis A[ur. fil.] | Natu M[ax.]' In other words, it is by a man called John who was the oldest or inheriting son of a knight, and whose surname began with 'De'. Now the only possible John De[...] listed as a member of the university in the period who was also the son of a knight and of the right kind of age is John Denham, the famous poet. Is this therefore an unknown piece of his verse, in French? This is a question yet to be answered decisively, but alas the script does not appear to be Denham's, on the basis of three of his known autograph letters.¹³

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Vivian's 'Voyage', to use his term, is narrated in first person, but without the narrator revealing much personality: his is a journal of sights and sounds, of political and social commentary, and not, or not often, of feelings or reactions to what he experiences, beyond conventional apostrophes to spectacles of massive wealth or size. For a don, Vivian also refers to comparatively few books. On the topic of where Nero was buried, Vivian mentions, but does not name, a book in Italian published in Rome in 1637.¹⁴ He also mentions with approval William Thomas's rather old *The Historie of Italy* of 1549. But most importantly he defers on a couple of occasions to the account furnished by George Sandys's *A Relation of a Journey Begun an. Dom. 1610* (London, 1615), and it would be surprising if he had not also read George's brother Edwin's earlier *Relation of the State of Religion in the Western Partes of the World* (London, 1605). Sandys's *Relation*, indeed, with its constant antiquarian referencing of places to their classical selves and to any literary references that might assist this project, was obviously Vivian's model. Yet Vivian is not quite as insistent in this respect as Sandys—for all his ability to produce an apposite Latin verse quotation, Vivian is in fact more interested in the current political and social reality of the places he visits.

Vivian set sail, as his title informs us, from Bristol on 1 December 1636. After a rough crossing his ship arrived at the mouth of the Garonne, making it to Bordeaux for Christmas Eve. Vivian then found a berth on a boat to Toulouse, and then travelled on to Montpellier. From Marseilles he took a boat to Genoa, and from there to Leghorn (Livorno). After spending almost a month there, Vivian sailed down the west coast of Italy all the way to Naples, where he then disembarked and headed back up Italy, now overland, to Rome. After a long stop there, Vivian continued through Siena and Florence, over the Apennines to Bologna and on, finally, to Venice. His journey back took him through Padua, Brescia, and then over the 'dismal, and horrid Rocks' of the Alps, using the

¹² J. R. Guy, 'William Bewe: bishop and secret agent', *History Today* 26 (1976), 796–803; ODNB, 'Bewe'.

¹³ I have checked MSS Carte 22, fol. 20r; Carte 29, fols. 45r–6v, 223–24v.

¹⁴ Vivian had evidently read about the tradition that Nero's ghost haunted the site on which was then built the Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo. Perhaps Pompilio Totti's *Ristretto delle grandezze di Roma* (Rome, 1637)? Or Giovanni Francesco Delfini's *Grandezze dell'alma città di Roma antiche, e moderne* (Rome, 1637), although this was not the first edition of this book?

Simplon Pass ('St Pioon') to Geneva. Then there was an easier journey into France, through Lyon to Paris, where he arrived on St Peter's Eve (29 June), and then homewards via Dieppe to Dover, 'and thence came Post to London', as his account concludes. It is interesting to consider that Vivian therefore overlapped on the continent with none other than the great English poet John Milton, who left half a year after Vivian, but went through Paris first, going by land to Nice, then taking the Genoa–Leghorn sea route, as Vivian had before him. Milton then went via Florence (June 1638) to Rome (October), and then on to Naples, before turning back, stopping off again in Rome and Florence, before following the route Vivian had taken home, via Venice to Verona and Milan, through Lombardy and the Apennine Alps to Geneva, France, and back to England. Milton did not keep a journal that we know of, and one tangential value of Vivian's relation is that it gives us eyewitness accounts of most of the places Milton visited within months of the poet's time there.

Vivian does not spend too long explaining the kind of company in which he travelled, but he does tell us about his more important encounters. To start with, he was careful, as he proudly notes, not to travel with any English speakers. When he took an English boat from Genoa to Leghorn, he insisted that otherwise he had 'not iournie[d] with any English man, or any one that spake, or vnderstood our language, from Bordeaux the first towne that I landed at in France, to Naples the farthest citie of Italy'. And when he got to Leghorn, Vivian spent four intensive weeks there 'to learne the Italian tongue'. Thereafter he made good use of his spoken Italian, and felt himself able to comment, for instance, that of all the cities he visited, it was in Siena that the purest and most pleasant Italian was spoken. But Vivian gradually came into contact with more and more English speakers after he had left Naples for Rome. Riding in Campania he and his company were diverted by the tales of travel of a gentleman of Gray's Inn who had lately been travelling in Ireland and the Low Countries. In Rome their party was met and entertained—as Milton would be—by the Protector of the English, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew to Pope Urban VIII; and by that point Vivian's group was evidently a rather large one, as he commented that of the eighteen of them, only three were not Protestants (the three included Lord Askin, son of the Earl of Marne, whom Vivian later met again). It is in Rome too that Vivian gives us a hint about his own origins, as he visits the grave of 'my countryman' Sir Robert Peckham of Northamptonshire, presumably he who died in Rome in 1569.¹⁵ Among his travelling companions we also learn of at least two Cambridge graduates, and at Padua he records that he just missed there 'Sir Thomas Littleton', father to the two unfortunate brothers who drowned at Kingsmills in 1635. This is Sir Thomas Lyttelton, the first baronet (1595/6–1650), and later a royalist army officer.¹⁶ Two of his sons, John and Thomas, were scholars at Magdalen College, and indeed both died in the same accident at Oxford, the seventeen-year-old jumping into the Cherwell in an attempt to save his thirteen-year-old brother. The accident caused a stir, and the monument to the two drowned sons still survives in Magdalen College chapel today. Abraham Cowley also wrote a poem on the tragedy, which is probably what Vivian is thinking of. It was in Padua too that Vivian, introduced by a mutual friend of Gray's Inn, met Sir John Scudamore, who he describes as brother-in-law to the English Ambassador to France (somewhat puzzling for now, as the English ambassador in Paris *was* Sir John Scudamore); they travel back together as far as Orleans, Scudamore's diplomatic letters easing their passage at least once. In Orleans Vivian then encountered the Earl of Desmond (i.e. George Feilding, d. 1666). Then there is 'Dr Nickles' of Jesus College, Cambridge, who in Paris explains to Vivian the troubles Geneva has lately faced. He may be the Richard Nichols of Jesus and Peterhouse who relocated to Paris and turned Roman Catholic priest. In Geneva Vivian

¹⁵ For him see the entry in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1509-1558*, ed. by S. T. Bindoff (London, 1982).

¹⁶ For him see the entry in *ODNB*.

also met up with Sir Andrew Knifton (i.e. Kniveton, third baronet and Royalist Governor of Tutbury Castle in the Civil War), whom, as Vivian informs us, he had parted with in Oxford on 5 November the previous year, both promising to meet in Venice; Vivian caught him on his return trip, while Kniveton had not got any further than Geneva on his way out. On the very last leg of his journey, Vivian rather glamorously travelled back across the channel with 'M. Belliuer', none other than Pomponne de Bellièvre (1606–1657), the French ambassador to England. No wonder they were met with 'more then 100 Pieces of Ordnance' when they docked at Dover.

Vivian evidently liked to play the gentleman traveller, and his account is rather courtly in its aspirations. He does dwell on each university town through which he passed, usually to contrast them unfavourably with Oxford. He also commented on the odd library, notably the Vatican Library at Rome, 'in forme of a T, almost 300 paces long in the top, but in the foote about one hundred', as well as the library of the Augustinian Friars there, 'the which onely in all Rome, is at all times, to all men Common', and also the monastery of San Lorenzo at Florence, with its 'famous ... Librarie also, wherein I saw & read in the workes of Terence, and Petrarck, written in their own hands'. Padua, Vivian remarks, is notable for its famous physic garden, where the 'Botanick reader' sits each day, and will identify any plant brought to him. Vivian also comments on a monastery at Padua with a great mathematician in it, much visited by the English—he does not name him, but perhaps this is Andrea Argoli (1570–1657), professor of mathematics there from 1632 to 1657.

Vivian's eye is for the physical detail of towns and cities and anything memorable about their political or social organization. He can compare foreign states favorably with the English situation: praising the governance of Florence, for instance, he pointedly remarks that 'The Nobilitie, much lesse the people, busie not their heads, in questioning their Princes prerogatiue'. He is tolerant of without being tempted by Roman Catholicism, which he is at pains to present as somewhat silly, if very wealthy. Indeed, Vivian actually complained that the French were slovenly at worship, people kneeling with their hats on while priests administer with their 'back parts' facing the congregation; we are 'more decently ordered' in England, this Caroline Laudian sniffed. The Jesuits, of course, fascinate him, especially the sums they will spend adorning their gaudy churches, but in the Swiss territories he noted with satisfaction that in Sion they have banished the Jesuits 'for makeing their children too subtill schollars'. His longest descriptions are reserved for Rome, where he observes the Pope officiating at first hand, and Vivian is at pains to emphasize what a friendly host Cardinal Barberini is, and how his uncle the Pope is really just 'a pleasant and honest old man'.

Vivian was also travelling in a time of war, and he comments at length on the political situation in each town he passes through. So although we do get the don's classical musings—here is where Hercules fought the giants ('as saith Mela'), here is where Aeneas landed, here is Cicero's villa, here he whistled to the dolphins offshore at Piombino, 'who would follow our musick, & swimme vnder our boates sides to heare it', the likely origin of the tale of Arion—the total emphasis is more on current affairs. Vivian also documents local customs, not always approvingly. Landing at Leghorn, for instance, he finds that it is carnival time, and a very carnal time indeed, with cross-dressing:

Men most commonly in woemens apparell, & women in mens, with boyes after them, with whole baskets full of Egshells, the Eggs suckt out, & the shells fill'd full of water, and stopt with leafe-gold, or silver ...

In Francolino Vivian watches the local girls dancing on a Sunday afternoon, in the English style, he comments, and not 'braile wise' like the French. Yet for all his interest in local

customs, Vivian also delights in trying to find the right English comparisons for his readers, often rather striking ones. Thus the situation of Lyons reminds him of Bristol between the Avon and the Frome; the turrets on the university buildings in Montpellier are like those on the chapel of King's College, Cambridge; and the market at Leghorn is like that at Covent Garden, where they also play a festival game like 'Cornish in-hurling' with a ball like 'our bladder foote-ball', but struck with the hand. The prospect of Rome from the Via Appia puts Vivian in mind of the Vale of the White Horse and Abingdon as seen from the top of Ilsley Downs. Vivian never forgets where he is from, and his account is shot through with patriotic remarks, usually taking the form of an insistence that the English were particularly liked (almost) wherever he went.

Why did Vivian compose such a long, literary account of his travels? It may have been because he felt he ought to have something to show for this exciting sabbatical, funded at least partially by his college stipend. It may be because he wanted to imitate Sandys and produce a text that displayed his expertise as a traveller and an observer. In the *Voyage* itself, Vivian stresses for the reader what he sees as his two main achievements. The first is linguistic: Vivian talked his way across southern Europe in French, Italian, and Latin, without ever using an interpreter. The other is his bravery and his speed: he covered more terrain faster than anyone else of which he has heard, and he didn't take shortcuts by boat unless he had too, and did not avoid dangerous routes or cities. He is our man in the field; with his reticence to trouble the reader with his own subjective impressions, and his insistence on the minute documentation of every physical and social aspect of every single town through which he passed, Vivian is more the well-connected political journalist than the Oxford antiquary. When he returned back to New College he was determined to tell his admiring peers all about his adventures, and so he carefully wrote up this lengthy account presumably from the pocket-book records he evidently kept throughout his journeys. The poems he collected and placed before his manuscript also suggest both that his friends indeed read his account, and that he intended the complete dossier to be printed. For whatever reason, possibly the coming of war in England itself, possibly insufficient interest from the booksellers, Vivian left this project on the shelf. What happened to it between then and the mid nineteenth century when it was acquired by the college is unknown; but even since that date it has barely been touched. This is a shame: Vivian's 'Voyage' should become better known.

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