

on the coins from the excavations of Paul Lazarides at Acronauplia in 1972, which range from the 6th to the beginning of the 19th century (M. Galani-Krikou). Then come two contributions on the monetary circulation in Argolid in the Middle Ages: A. Kossyva presents two hoards found in Argos in 2005 during an emergency excavation conducted by the 4th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. J. Baker and G. Tsekes then discuss finds of coins from the Limnes area. The thematic section of the second volume gives

three contributions on the history of Morea: K. D. Papakosma deals with private credit in the medieval Peloponnese on the basis of a set of Argian documents, D. Athanasoulis evokes a lead bull of the Hospitallers found in the castle of Chloumoutzi (Clermont) dating from the period when Philibert de Naillac (1396-1421) was Grand Master of the Order and A. Mazarakis presents the first medal of the Hospitaller Order: Mazarakis presents the first medal struck by contemporary Greece on the initiative of Ioannis Capodistrias.

D. Evgenidou concludes this second volume by summarising in Greek the achievements of the various contributions, while welcoming the advances offered by the colloquium in the history of the Byzantine, Medieval and Modern Peloponnese. Her conclusion is similar to that given by O. Picard for the first volume, which clearly states the main interest of this publication: to make available to the scholars a considerable amount of unpublished material coming from excavations actively carried out in all the Peloponnesian regions; to this must be added some reflections on the circulation and production of regional money from the end of the archaic era to the modern period. The Argolid is particularly well treated, but the editors are to be thanked for having also encouraged contributions on other regions of the Peloponnese, from Achaia to Laconia.

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## HISTORIOGRAPHY

**D.J. Ian Begg, *Lost Worlds of Ancient and Modern Greece. Gilbert Bagnani: The Adventures of a Young Italo-Canadian Archaeologist in Greece, 1921-1924.* pp. xxxviii + 309, 14 ills, 5 maps, 1 tbl. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2020. ISBN 978-1-78969-452-9, hardcover £25.**

This volume reconstructs the fascinating vicissitudes of a prodigious young man and his adventures in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean between the years 1921 and 1924.

The story of the Italo-Canadian Gilbert Bagnani has very different characteristics from the experiences of many other young archaeologists, who in the early decades of the 20th century stayed in Greece and the Levant to study and visit the remains of ancient civilizations, residing at scientific and academic foreign institutions in the area and especially in Athens.

Ian Begg highlights very well the intellectual and character traits that made this 21-year-old man a privileged interlocutor of the highest archaeological figures who resided in Greece at that time, but also a frequent visitor to high-ranking salons in which the intricacies of politics were discussed in a country that was going through a very delicate period.

The numerous epistles that Gilbert assiduously sent to his mother Florence, preserved at the University of Trent, in Peterborough, Ontario, meticulously studied by the author of this book, appear as a whole not only as a travel diary but also as an acute examination of contemporary events and of the debate, then at its highest levels, between royalists and Venizelists. The unprecedented point of view is that of an intelligent dandy, a lover of social life who did not disdain to combine profound discourses on the country's past and present culture with receptions, gala dinners or invitations for a tea or a whisky and soda in the halls of the prestigious Hotel Grande Bretagne.

A strength of this book is the deep and precise contemporary historical reconstruction that Ian Begg offers to the reader, often leaving the word to Bagnani and his letters, in a tangle of names and exponents of noble families about whom precise details are given in the text or in footnotes.

There are some aspects that deserve to be emphasized and discussed. First, the Roman training

of Gilbert, who had been a student of Federico Halbherr, reverently referred to as “the eminence gris” of Italian archaeologists. The relationship with a man like Halbherr, already famous for his Cretan discoveries and pioneering exploration of Cyrenaica in 1910-1911,<sup>1</sup> an outstanding individual of profound but resolute kindness, a tireless and independent scholar, must certainly have influenced Gilbert’s disposition not to be led too much along predetermined tracks. It must be remembered that Halbherr, a student of Domenico Comparetti, had done a dissertation on the Goths, and then turned to Greek epigraphy before also becoming an archaeologist. Bagnani – as this book well informs us – graduated with a thesis on the depiction of fountains in Greek painted ceramics, and then found his greatest passions in the Byzantine and medieval periods of Greece, and while visiting Rhodes he underwent a particular attraction to the history of the Knights of St. John and their cultural and architectural legacy. It was Halbherr who sent him to study in Greece, at the Italian Archaeological School in Athens which he had founded in 1909 and at that time was directed by Alessandro Della Seta.

Bagnani’s letters recall the accounts of other scholars, such as those of Margherita Guarducci, also a pupil of Halbherr who later succeeded him in the Roman chair of Greek Epigraphy (the first one in Italy). Like Bagnani, Guarducci, who attended the school in ‘27, also recalls, for example, the accommodation inside the Makriyanni building, later demolished, and the Parlantis, who took care of the household duties and the technical aid.<sup>2</sup>

In 1921 as students, in addition to Bagnani, were Antonio Cattaneo,<sup>3</sup> whose mediocrity has left no traces in the history of studies other than a marked intolerance witnessed by the Director and his colleagues; and then Doro Levi, with whom Gilbert struck up a good friendship and who after the Second World War became director in turn, from 1947 to 1976.

It is very interesting to see how in Bagnani’s letters we can trace the beginnings of what later became the peculiar interests of the scholars of the time: Levi was enchanted by the ruins of the Cretan palaces, while the director Della Seta, who did not share Bagnani’s byzantine and medieval passions, was in those years particularly involved

with a problem that had always intrigued him: the question of the origin of the Etruscans and the search for a Tyrrhenian substratum in Asia Minor and on the islands bordering the coast, including Lemnos, where, however, in those years, to his great frustration, the authorities still did not grant him permission to excavate.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the divergent interests and some initial reproaches for the excesses of “vita mondana”, the relationship between Della Seta and Bagnani is soon based on mutual esteem: the Director was well aware of the extraordinary potential of the pupil, who had also learned to speak modern Greek fluently in a short time. The research assigned to him on the Roman agora engaged him passionately, and the presentation conference was a success, crowned by the presence in the hall of most of his high-ranking friends. As a confident supporter of ideas that wanted to show themselves as innovative, Gilbert asserts that the agora was originally the Hadrianic gymnasium and downplays the Augustan interventions, which we now know to have constituted the initial phase of that complex, while the gymnasium, in fact, still awaits to find a secure identification.<sup>5</sup>

There is no need to mention here all the illustrious names that Bagnani frequented in Athens; descriptions of his worldly sorties and influential connections abound in the volume; a *modus vivendi* that perplexes his colleagues, first and foremost Doro Levi, who were more inclined to a withdrawn study within the walls of a library, but that for Gilbert was congenial and derived from a well-established and family tradition from his upbringing, which made him an innate social climber. In fact, his father Ugo made a rapid military career, becoming aide-de-camp to King Vittorio Emanuele III and then an Italian diplomatic representative to the British army during the Great War.

It will suffice to recall, at least as far as the world of classical studies is concerned, among Gilbert’s most frequent visits obviously the directors and deputy directors of the British and American Schools, whose locations were, as today, next to each other in the elegant Kolonaki district. Stanley Casson, deputy director of the BSA, will be his main intermediary in reaching out to other personalities such as Alan Wace and Carl Blegen, respectively director of the BSA and deputy director of the American School of Classical Studies, with whom he will have long discussions about the new Minoan

<sup>1</sup> Which Bagnani visited in 1921 and on which other correspondence and photographic material exists in Trent. On the exploration of Halbherr see Struffolino 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See Bandini 2003: 225-244.

<sup>3</sup> See in general La Rosa 1995: 67, 79; and <https://www.scuoladiatene.it/saia/storia/gli-allievi.html>.

<sup>4</sup> See for ex.: Della Seta 1937a; 1937b. For the start of the Italian archaeological activities in Lemnos (1923): De Domenico 2020.

<sup>5</sup> De Domenico 2018.

discoveries in Crete and Sir Arthur Evans's work in Knossos, already criticised for his restoration choices: "too much Evans, too little Minos" (p. 164). But the palatial civilisations left Gilbert rather cold and uninterested.

As the author rightly points out, Bagnani favours relationships with the highest offices of these institutions and with established scholars, rather than with students of his age. A position more unique than rare, even today and especially for a student of the Italian School. On the other hand, his connections with the diplomatic world undoubtedly made things easier for him: Bagnani had constant relations with the Italian ambassador Giulio Cesare Montagna, with the British ambassadors Lord Granville and Francis Oswald Lindley, and with military authorities of the calibre of General Fernando Perrone di San Martino, military advisor to the embassy and already a friend of his father.

As is still the case today for trainees at the Italian Archaeological School in Athens, their stay included (at the time only for men) trips throughout Greece, to Crete and the Aegean islands. And here Gilbert transforms himself from a snobbish dandy to the perfect archaeologist, ready to adapt to the most extreme situations. Many of his epistolary accounts are not so far from the travel accounts of the 19th century European explorers, although his view of the monuments takes on a much more mature and subtle objective and descriptive force.

In the spring of '22 the students travelled first to Eleusis, then to Delphi and then to the Peloponnese, where more than by Mycenae, Tiryns or Argos, Gilbert was particularly struck by the ruins of Mistra: "... are amongst the most interesting things I have ever seen" (p. 91). Evidently, as for many travellers – especially the French – who had preceded him, the material, cultural and religious remnants of Byzantine and medieval Greece provided a way to establish a more direct link with the contemporary world before their eyes. The role of the Orthodox Church on the other hand, in those years, continued to be decisive in the country's domestic and foreign political choices.

Maurice Barrès, in Greece between 1900 and 1905, wrote emblematic words about Mistra: "Mistra ressemble à telle jeune femme de qui un mot, un simple geste nous convainc que ses secrets, ses palpitations et son parfum satisferaient, pour notre vie entière, nos plus profonds désirs de bonheur", and again: "Mistra s'effrite sans tristesse. Ses couvents, ses mosquées, ses églises latines et byzantines gardent un air familier délicieusement jeune. Au milieu de cette dévastation lumineuse,

j'ai vu les plus noirs cyprès; dans la cour de l'église métropolitaine, l'un d'eux valait une colonne de Phidias, tandis qu'à ses pieds un lilas embaumait .... Cette montagne est construite comme une intelligence. Des débris de toutes les époques et des races les plus diverses y prennent une couleur d'ensemble; ils sont tapissés, reliés par un lierre vigoureux où bourdonnent les abeilles".<sup>6</sup>

After Olympia and the northern regions, it was finally time to embark for Rhodes, where the students found an excellent guide in Amedeo Maiuri. In Kos, Bagnani decided to carry out excavations on his own in search of the structures of the Hellenistic-Roman theatre, which however yielded very few results.<sup>7</sup>

After the Dodecanese and a passage to Asia Minor, it was the turn of the Meteora of Thessaly: "monasteries in the air" and finally Crete, where, bent by the terrible heat of August, Gilbert saw his teacher Halbherr again, together with Gaspare Oliverio, another of his pupils specialising at the Italian School in 1913, who would soon have a brilliant future as an epigraphist and superintendent in Cyrenaica. With Luigi Pernier and Roberto Paribeni, Halbherr had already started the great palatial excavations of Minoan Crete: the villa of Hagia Triada and Phaistos, still today amongst the crown jewels of the missions of the Italian School.<sup>8</sup> But Gilbert is more interested in Venetian fortifications and in the history of the struggle against the Turks, on which Ian Begg does not fail to inform the reader in detail.

In parallel with his archaeological engagements and thanks to the social contacts he had made in Athens, his friend William Miller, the *Morning Post's* correspondent from Rome, offered to Bagnani the opportunity to publish articles on the political situation in Greece in the British newspaper, initially anonymously and then, due to an unintentional tip-off, systematically and officially in his own name. Bagnani – despite his royalist sympathies (dictated more by outward appearances than deep ideological conviction) – always remains very objective in describing the facts.

On the background of the adventurous events of the young archaeologist passionate about contemporary politics, the reader immediately perceives how in this volume (starting from the cover image) one can grasp the dramatic escalation that led to the tragic events in Smyrna of 13 September 1922. The nationalistic *Μεγάλη Ίδέα* of the patriot Ioannis Kolettis, then fervently supported by Eleutherios

<sup>6</sup> Barrès 1906, pp. 241-242, 244, 247.

<sup>7</sup> Santi 2019: 329.

<sup>8</sup> See La Rosa 1986.

Venizelos, materialized with the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920 which granted Italy the Dodecanese and Greece the cities of the Anatolian coast. As is well known, this inflamed the spirits of Mustafa Kemal's Turkish nationalists and led to the outbreak of war, which had precisely its tragic climax in the reconquest of Smyrna, the devastation of which is reconstructed in all its horror of fire, killings and deportations in the pages of Ian Begg.

After a break in Rome, Gilbert Bagnani, reappointed to the Athens School together with Doro Levi for a second year, found himself in a profoundly changed country. What is now considered by many scholars to be the genocide of the Greeks of Anatolia, along with those of Pontus, will have as its first consequence the outpouring of a huge mass of refugees towards mainland Greece as well as the abdication of King Constantine and his formal replacement by his son George II, who was in fact a hostage in his residence while power was in the hands of the military led by Colonels Gonatas and Plastiras. Many of Bagnani's old royalist friends were imprisoned, but he continued his work as a reporter by frequently visiting them in their cells.<sup>9</sup>

With the new year, new students joined the Italian School, among them three women: Maria Caianiello, who unfortunately passed away the following year, Gina Reggiani and Emilia Zalapy, an Etruscologist and already author of a monographic publication.<sup>10</sup> The only man was the Triestine Giulio Jacopich, as he is always named in the book according to his original surname of Slavic origin. In fact, from 1930 he Italianised it to Jacopi. Here (p. 195) Ian Begg touches on a very delicate problem that he then prudently leaves aside: a "sinister secret" as he calls it, namely both his fascist inclination and his ill-concealed anti-Semitism, which in later years would lead him to "betray his Jewish colleagues". Jacopi will end up replacing Maiuri in Rhodes and his irascible and jealous behavior will become proverbial, but far worse suspicions are gathering about him, for example about some allegations that, perhaps, were at the basis of the deportation and death of the epigraphist Mario Segre and his family on May 23, 1944.<sup>11</sup>

In 1923 Bagnani will dedicate himself to other trips: he returns to Mycenae in the company of his mother

who had come to visit him for a short period, then he goes to visit the monasteries of Mount Athos and the island of Karpathos; he decides to go back to see what remains of Smyrna, a "Paradise Lost"; then ends his tour of the Cyclades by finally visiting the sacred island of Delos.

With the advent of Fascism in Italy, the assassination of the Italian delegation on the Greek-Albanian border in August 1923 and Mussolini's futile retaliation against the island of Corfu, Ambassador Montagna and General Perrone asked Bagnani to go undercover in the Peloponnese to check the weak points of the railway line near the isthmus and to sound out the people's mood towards the Italians. Gilbert, who had decided to move to Canada precisely to get away from the regime, ended up being co-opted as the Duce's spy on Greek soil.

Meanwhile, Halbherr sends all his collaborators home, leaving him alone in Crete. As always, he is a tireless worker totally dedicated to science in defiance of all risks.

A serious and punctilious archaeologist, culturally open to the investigation of other historical periods, an able journalistic correspondent, an incurable salon-lover and admirer of luxury, gifted with an intelligent sense of irony,<sup>12</sup> even a secret agent. Gilbert Bagnani's multifaceted personality emerges very well from the pages of Ian Begg's book, which takes us not only through the history of Greece in the 1920s but also through that of the Archaeological Schools and of the Italian one in particular. For those who, like the writer of this review, were also students at the SAIA (in 2019 and at a much higher age than Gilbert was), certain aspects of the social life described in this book may remind us of some characteristic moments of Athenian life: the lectures at the other Schools, the buffets, some chats with colleagues and perhaps even with professors and directors, but nothing compared to the levels that this very young Italo-Canadian, endowed with great abilities and helped by an uncommon academic and family heritage, was able to reach in those two years.

The role of archaeological Schools, missions and cultural institutions abroad in general as bridgeheads for peaceful political penetration has long been the subject of debate (see pp. 57-58). Halbherr's trip to Libya has also been discussed in this sense, perhaps attributing to it an excessive

<sup>9</sup> In narrating these political upheavals, Ian Begg draws much – and rightly so – on the studies of Michael Llewellyn Smith, particularly: M. Llewellyn Smith 1998, for ex. p. 323.

<sup>10</sup> Zalapy 1920.

<sup>11</sup> See Barbanera 2003: 218-221. even today the question is often passed over in silence or in any case treated with extreme caution. Bianchi Bandinelli, one of the very few scholars who raised the problem was driven by his communist ideology.

<sup>12</sup> Amusing in their self-conscious naivety are the nicknames by which Gilbert designated some prominent personalities in his letters to the mother: Della Seta became the Worm or W, because the name reminded him of the silkworm; while Halbherr is ½ gent = half gentleman, from the exact English translation of the Austrian surname.



role while it actually played only a small part.<sup>13</sup> Ian Begg's assertion that: "The Italian government used "peaceful penetration by supporting or encouraging schools, archaeology and investments rather than armed aggression, in order to increase Italian influence around the Mediterranean" (p. 29), appears a little too generous, especially when looking at the colonial events in Libya. But perhaps it is just a game of mirrors and depends on the angle from which one looks. Then again, politics is also this.

Now we just have to wait impatiently for the next two volumes of this pre-announced trilogy: the one on Gilbert's travels in Europe and, above all, the one on Egypt, where Carlo Anti, who first welcomed him on his arrival in Piraeus, wanted him in the 1930s as an assistant at the excavation of Tebtynis, and later Achille Vogliano also called him to Medinet Madi: two very important excavations that, in the past and present, have made the history of the University of Milan.

When Gilbert Bagnani is involved, connections are never coincidences.

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**David W.J. Gill, Winifred Lamb: Aegean Prehistorian and Museum Curator. pp. vi + 276, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018. ISBN 978-1-78491-879-8, paperback £30; 978-1-8491-880-4, E-book £16.**

As a 21st century female archaeologist, reviewing a book about Winifred Lamb, a most accomplished early 20th century British archaeologist, is both fascinating and extremely daunting. Although my review should be limited to the biography written by David W. J. Gill and not on the subject of his book, it is hard for me not to consider my own position and accomplishments against those of a woman who had dedicated her whole life to her discipline, and who helped set important milestones in its development, of which we are the beneficiaries of today, but who, on the basis of her gender alone, was never promoted to senior academia. For this book is not a typical biography; there are hardly any insights whatsoever on Winifred Lamb's personal life! The book in its entirety revolves around her professional life as a prehistorian, excavator, museum curator, acquirer/collector of antiquities, and benefactor. Her accomplishments

<sup>13</sup> Labanca 2009, with further bibliography.