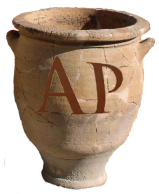
Journal of Greek Archaeology

2016

VOLUME 1



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ISSN: 2059-4674 (print)
2059-4682 (online)

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Gerald Brisch (ed). *The Dodecanese: further travels among the insular Greeks. Selected writings of J. Theodore and Mabel V.A. Bent, 1885-1888.* (3rd Guides) 2015. Oxford: Archaeopress. pp. xiv+194, illustrated throughout in b/w. ISBN 978-1-78491-096-9 paperback £15.00.

Brisch's edition of a collection of selective travel writings of J. Theodore and Mabel V.A. Bent during their tour of the Dodecanese (1885–1888), is an interesting introduction to the couple's rather eccentric and bemusing view of this part of the eastern Mediterranean. While the short preface by Marc Dubin and the introduction to the volume by Gerald Brisch provide the necessary background to the uninitiated reader of the importance of this genre of travelogues of the late 19th century, they are limited in their offering of a clear motive or logic behind the selection of the specific writings presented in this book. In other words, it is unclear as to how this selection of mostly already published articles came to be, and for what audience it is intended. While the editor refrains from interfering with the original writings by providing only a limited number of footnotes, the near absence of a detailed commentary makes it at times a tedious and rather repetitive read, providing hardly a historical or cultural context for the ordinary reader. At the same time, from an academic perspective, although the writings themselves present interesting glimpses of island life during this period, their research potential is tainted by the Bents' own biases and preconceptions about the cultures they encountered. Thus, there is very little information that can be of significant use to present-day archaeologists regarding the archaeological 'explorations' of the Bents. And while some of their most detailed 'ethnographic' descriptions, if true observances at all (as rightly pointed out by the editor on several occasions) do offer some fascinating insights on local culture, many of them are certainly not as unique to these islands as the Bents like to present them. In fact, in some instances, one wonders how they could have missed observing similar occurrences in other parts of the Greek world that they had visited! Despite these shortcomings, and along with some proof-reading issues, and the excruciatingly annoying type-setting of the present book (small print and hardly any margins provided), the strength of the present volume is certainly its ability to inform us on 19th-century Anglo-centric views of this corner of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, I would like to focus my attention on these aspects of the book.

The book is divided into three main parts, of which the largest is the first section (pp. 1–104), which contains a selection of J.T. Bents' published writings on the islands now referred to as the Dodecanese. The second part (pp. 105–173) consists of Mabel's (Theodore's wife and travel partner) notebooks from the same travel period, which she called her *Chronicles*, and were never published. The third part of the book (pp. 174–187) are so-called *sidetracks*, which are mostly additions or asides to published articles, selected and presented by the editor in the present book.

Because Theodore's writings were based on re-worked notes (as well as his wife's notebooks and his own memory) and turned into lecture presentations and published at a later date, they appear as refined pieces of writing, aimed at an exclusively scholarly/literary audience (the bibliography includes *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Athenaeum*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *The National Review*, *The Classical Review*, etc.). In this regard, they follow closely the prototype of travel genre common during this period, including writings associated with the Grand Tour. What makes J.T. Bent's writings stand out from the rest is that he introduces his audience to less travelled destinations—in this case the islands of the Aegean under Ottoman rule,—focusing less on their monuments and history, and more on the people encountered and their local culture and idiosyncrasies. What seems to have interested the Bents the most in these cultures, was highlighting the 'other', the curious, the different, and the 'primitive', while at the same time searching for perceived connections with an ancient 'Hellenic' past. In his own words: '…A remote island such as Karpathos is, affords the best possible study of Hellenism as it exists to-day, and the remotest village of this remote island is Elympos, lost away amongst precipitous mountains, a village of shepherds who speak a dialect which even their nearest neighbours can hardly understand, and which contains old classical words and idioms which have disappeared from amongst other Greek-speaking communities…' (p. 51). In fact, Theodore's essay on the Karthapiote dalect (pp. 56–59; 181–182), and the extract from his article on 'Parallels to Homeric Life Existing in Greece To-day' (pp. 176–180) clearly show his interest in the linguistic connections between the local idioms encountered in his travels and the Homeric epics. His descriptions of the local islanders, their customs and general way of life, often also make reference to classical texts such as when describing the sandals of the Karpathiote shepherds and '…a plough such as Homer would have seen if he had not been blind' (p. 48). But whilst the Bents seem quite set in identifying direct connections and continuity from an ancient Greek past, they

surprisingly fail to acknowledge, or even allude to, any possible 'oriental' connections or influences. Interestingly, with the exception of multicultural Rhodes, the islands on the Bents' itinerary (referred to as the 'Turkish Islands' since they were still under the control of the Ottoman Empire) were inhabited only by ethnic Greeks. Thus, the Bents regarded these islands as having developed in a vacuum, without any external influences, for thousands of years, a view that reflected a general tendency among certain contemporary European and British intellectuals, who wished to identify uninterrupted continuities with a classical past. The Bents were obviously no exception to this trend. For example, when discussing the covering of women's faces in Karpathos, and just in case there were any doubts, Theodore makes a point of saying: 'This, I'm inclined to believe, is not a Turkish, but an ancient Greek custom, for an island like Karpathos, which has only been two hundred years under Turkish rule, and on which a Turkish woman has doubtless never stepped, it is not likely that the fashion has been borrowed from them.' (p. 48). The only time we are given any glimpses as to the interaction between different cultural groups is in the article on Rhodes, where the standard stereotypical description of the various ethnic groups is presented: 'The Turk of Rhodes, curiously enough, is a more energetic individual than the Greek. Many of them are fishermen, and possess light sailing vessels for this purpose. Others are blacksmiths, tanners, painters and joiners. …The Greek is an idle vagabond for the most part, whose great ambition is to become proprietor of a sweet shop…They pass their days in complete inactivity in the midst of tobacco fumes….As for the Greek women, they never seem to have anything to do; they sit on their doorsteps and gossip from morning to night. They are a degraded lot;..'(p.3). '...The Spanish Jews are not a pleasant element in Rhodian society. With the usual astuteness of their race they have managed to secure for themselves the best quarter of the walled town, and they are as far as possible removed from the Greeks, for there is always enmity between Greek and Jew…'(p. 6).

Despite the perception of wishful connections with the epoch of Homer and Hesiod, the Brents often presented the Greek islanders in a condescending and derogatory manner. Terms such as 'primitive' and 'unciviliised' abound, and a focus on the exaggerated superstitious and ignorant nature of the locals dominates the description of their customs and rituals relating to birth, marriage and death. Thus, it is very difficult for the modern reader to like the Bents, especially when they insist on playing up their superiority and 'know-better' attitude, as in providing medical advice and remedies to the ignorant islanders who frequently visit them for cures to ailments that they themselves admit to have no idea about. Mabel writes: 'We have also had patients. The schoolmaster, who is 'doing nicely', brought us a bottle of very welcome ink—a suitable fee—and the news that a woman with a pain wished to be cured…and so a young woman was led in by her husband. I really was inwardly convulsed with laughter at the very home-questions T had the courage gravely to ask her; … Well! We did our best but we must always confine our prescriptions to available remedies, such as the herbs we see on the mountainside.'

An interesting example of their feeling of superiority is presented by Mabel in her curiosity to meet fellow-Englishman William Paton's Kalymnian wife: 'Mrs. Paton is a fine big girl who might pass for 20 but some say 14. She had a pretty new dress, quite out of keeping with the place…..She was very quiet and much more ladylike than her sister, a coarse rough girl with a dirty snuff-coloured handkerchief on her head…We could see some dirty little brethren in the general living room. It is very sad to see such relations for an English gentleman.' (p. 159). No wonder then that the class-conscious Bents found the absence of a class hierarchy amongst the Greeks an interesting phenomenon to comment about: '…Though they have a king, surely never were more true republicans than the Greeks. There appears to be perfect equality among them and a complete mingling of classes, neither dirt, poverty not want of education seems to make a difference… Phaedros, our dragoman, whose wife is quite a common woman, glad of a very old dress of mine, was treated quite as an equal. Mr. Philemon, who is the Greek Consul of Rhodes, and who is quite a gentleman and whose wife is a quite a lady and very well dressed, has a most ragged and dirty old father-in-law, Dr. Klados, and no one would take Mrs. Klados for a lady' (p. 135). And while the Bents lacked any compassion or empathy for the Greeks, on whom they were obviously intruding (such as when Theodore tried to sketch portraits of the islanders or Mabel took photographs of them), it is amusing that *they* were the ones who felt intruded upon by the locals: 'How superior is our treatment of the wild beasts in the zoological gardens! Each one has a bedroom that he can go into when he is tired of being stared at. Yesterday morning as I wished to button on my long gaiters, I retired to the end of the room and sat down with my back turned to the multitude, but as there was a little room between me and the wall, that soon became crowded. Once M said, 'What do you want here?' and a woman said 'Only it amuses my baby to see the woman write and the woman sew''(p. 125).

Meanwhile, British imperial arrogance is reflected at its best in the Bents' collecting enterprise of local textiles, pottery, antiques, and family heirlooms,

even though the Greeks often put-up a hard bargain, and at least on one occasion, didn't produce the goods they were paid for. Mabel describes this interesting purchase: 'There is a Turkish village and we persuaded a man for about a shilling to remove his wooden lock from his door for us'(p. 169). However, it is the Bents' collecting of antiquities and their archaeological explorations that certainly raise an eyebrow amongst modern archaeologists. In fact, as noted by Brisch, the main purpose of their visit to the islands 'was to excavate and remove items of archaeological and ethnographic interest—often for sale back in Britain' (n. 31, p. 22). This is certainly not an unusual endeavour by explorers and travellers of the period, but as self-proclaimed archaeologists, the Bents make the likes of Heinrich Schliemann appear almost 'professional' and ethically a little more responsible in comparison. With the exception of notable finds, such as the Neolithic limestone figure from Karpathos now in the British Museum, it is difficult to determine from the writings in this present volume as to the fate of the many discoveries mentioned by the Bents through their clandestine excavations. In the article on Telos, aside from the tomb explorations, Theodore also provides descriptions of the Byzantine fortifications and houses on the island, as well as inscriptions that he encountered (p. 23–24). The excavations on Karpathos are better documented, and the extract in this volume is from Theodore's article published in 1885 in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Mabel provides some more 'personal' details in her second Chronicle (pp. 115–116). The Bents' obvious disdain at anything Byzantine, a common sentiment amongst antiquarians of this time, is clearly shown here: 'After that I went to the workmen; who had discovered the pavement of a Byzantine church. We turn up our noses at anything ''tes Vizantines epoches', so T took them elsewhere' (p.132). In other passages we get further insights of what was perceived to be valuable to the Bents and what was not: 'We opened 7 graves. …We found nothing very fine to reward us –- some very coarse plates, one containing the bone of a sepia, some little 2-handled cups, a jug, very coarse, and 3 immense pithoi…We were very disappointed and decided that this had been a poor place' (p.116). Amusing is Mabel's account of her instructions to the Greek workmen on pitching a tent at Vourgounda: 'They could not understand the wooden runners and wanted to *tie* the ropes in knots and were amazed at the *mechani* when shown. I was tired enough in my tongue and limbs when after hoisting the Union Jack, I sat down to survey the tent and really the ropes all dancing have a very funny effect.' (p. 132). The Union Jack, which must have been quite a sight for the locals, is also mentioned in Mabel's entry for Easter Sunday, April 5th 1885: 'We hung out the Union Jack in honour of the day' (p. 135). At the same time, and to their credit, the Bents don't hesitate to be critical of English commercialism and its negative impact on the traditional lifeways of the 'old world' under their Crown's reign, in comparison with how similar lifeways have fared under Ottoman rule. The following is quite telling of their sentiment in this regard: 'As it is, Astypalaea is one of the most quaint old-world spots to be found in Greek or Turkish waters. Quaint costumes and still quainter customs still reign supreme, as they always will, under the banner of the Crescent; it is the Union Jack which scatters these things to the winds; great though our love is for antiquity, we English have dealt more harshly than any other people with the fashions of the old world. If England had bought Astypalaea neither custom or costume would now remain, for the inhabitants still remember how the British sailors gave fabulous prices for their dresses and laughed at their customs.' (p. 94). If only they shared the same sentiments with regards to their removal of antiquities!

Regardless of their questionable 'archaeological' methods (after all, modern archaeology as a discipline sprang out of 19th-century antiquarianism), the Bents' industrious antiquarian activities, focusing mostly on the excavation of ancient graves, must have paid off: Mabel counted 26 packages on the boat leaving Karpathos (p. 150), although it is not made clear if these all contained antiquities. Nevertheless, the Bents were anxious to not have their luggage checked by either Turkish or Greek authorities: 'The Turks have a disagreeable habit of examining outgoing luggage and we fear that the sight of so much together, and all we *hope* for from Saría, may excite them…then keeping them in the new boat in Syra harbour till we can get them on board a Liverpool steamer, for fear the Greeks should wish to have a look'(p. 144). And the Bents certainly had reason to take such precautions, given they were breaking the law.

The Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1874 was passed in an attempt to regulate the increased interest by foreigners in the looting of archaeological material throughout the Ottoman Empire. The subsequent 1884 Law, drafted in large part by Osman Hamdi Bey, the director of the Imperial Museum, was much stricter, requiring the application for permission to excavate, and for all finds to be transferred to the Imperial Museum in Constantinople.Enforcement of this law was almost impossible, especially in remote parts of the empire, where there were not enough officials to oversee and monitor the regulations or where corruption of local officials went mostly undetected. This was the climate the Bents found themselves in during their travels to the Dodecanese. While they were able to secure a permit to dig on Telos (after

bribing the local official with money and gifts, p. 115), their Karpathos excavations were unauthorised and clandestine. Mabel is quite unapologetic in her account of Theodore trying to secure a permit by bribing the local Turkish official (*kaimakam*), and we get a strong sense of her feeling of entitlement on the grounds of being English when she says: 'M went for the permission to the Kaimakam who lives next door and the Kaimakam refused to give it so T went and offered him money; he had presents, but this, to everyone's surprise he refused and told T he would prevent his digging or even visiting the ruins—T told him he was an Anglos and therefore could not be prevented travelling where he would, etc.' (p. 157). In any case, the excavations on Karpathos did take place, amidst as much secrecy as possible, concentrating on keeping the smaller finds that the Bents could easily conceal. Mabel notes: 'The big jars, as T said, we should have liked to keep…but not only would they have been expensive to bring home, if they had not been captured on the way, but would have caused a great fuss in Karpathos, where we did not mean to speak of excavations for a week' (p. 116). Elsewhere she says: 'We have been warned not to go to Rhodes as there is a Pasha there who is well aware of our digging in Karpathos and angry that the packing cases were not opened…' She also laments: '…Truly the balmy days of excavators are over.' (p. 159). Of course, this did not stop the Bents from engaging in even more clandestine expeditions. Theodore's most interesting article in the *Cornhill Magazine (*of which an extract is presented in this book) reacts to the restrictions placed on him and his wife (referred to as Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A.—Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries) to excavate, which lead to them defying the authorities and carrying on anyway, sarcastically calling themselves 'pirates' (p. 68). Mabel also plays up this idea when she states: 'Theodore at once took to visiting ships to put into practice our plan of chartering a ship and becoming pirates and taking workmen to 'ravage the coasts of Asia Minor.' Everyone says it's better to dig first and let them say Kismet after, than to ask leave of the Turks and have them spying there" (p. 163). Thus, they embarked on a cruise along the Turkish coast, exploring such sites as Myra and the nearby islet of Kakova (p. 167-169). Ironically for the Bents, on their arrival in Kakova, they found that the site had already been exhausted by Austrian excavators a few years earlier: "We went in the other direction, westwards, down a strait and landed at a mass of ruins (Kakova) where the Austrians spent 2 years, 4 years ago, with 2 ships taking anything they liked, lucky Austrians!, and they painted their flag very large on the rocks ." (p. 169). Eventually, when further negotiations with Hamdi Bey failed to allow them to return to excavate on the island of Thasos, the Bents moved on, and away from the Greek/Turkish coast (n. 60, p. 163). Aside from antiquities, the Bents' observations of local customs and traditions provide fascinating anthropological insights. Their commentary on matrilineal inheritance as observed on the islands is a significant contribution to understanding the social structures at play. Although still strictly a patriarchal society, the importance placed on the first-born children (whether male or female) is quite interesting. The fact that the husband of a first-born daughter is basically provided for by his wife (the husband moves in to a house provided to her as dowry) is an interesting phenomenon. Also noteworthy is the description of the gender-based differences in the dialects of Astypalaia, where men speak a different idiom to women (p. 96). Something that is not commented upon by the Bents is the obvious dominance of the nuclear family as the basis of the household. Their other observations of marriage, birth, and death customs are not much different from those observed by others in various parts of the Greek world.

The need of the Bents' to compare some phenomena, such as the custom of the shooting of an effigy of Judas Iscariote on Easter Monday, to the story of Guy Fawkes is quite interesting (p.35). In fact, on many occasions, the Bents, especially Theodore, refer to local names in their English translation, such as 'Peace' for Rignoula, 'Mrs. Lettuce' for Maroula (which in fact is a misinterpretation of a diminutive for Maria), or their English equivalent (Catherine, Peter, George, John, etc,). A fascinating read is also Theodore's attempt to explain St. John's revelations in light of a 'scientific' explanation, i.e. a possible eyewitness account of a volcanic eruption on the island of Santorini, in his article 'What St. John Saw on Patmos'(p. 86–94). This is a good example of 19th century rationalist thinking and scientific enquiry.

A positive account was given by the Bents on the topic of education as they observed it on the island of Nisyros. In fact, one of the *sidetracks* in this book focuses entirely on this issue, where praise is given to the progressive monastery of the Holy Virgin of the Cave and its Archimandrite Cyril (who was also the island's banker and printed cardboard notes used as a means of exchange) for the establishment of a school for boys and girls (pp. 182). In comparing education in Greece with that in remote places of the Ottoman Empire like Nisyros, this is what they have to say: 'In Greece proper, the work of the monasteries is practically over, since the Government has taken upon itself the sole superintendence of education, and is alone responsible for the improvement of the people. What monasteries once were, and what good they have done, can now only be realised in Turkey; …it is a question open to much doubt, as to whether the Greeks have benefited by the transfer of

education from the priests, who have acted for ages as their protectors from annihilation and barbarism, to the Government schools; in Turkey, as we have seen, they provide for the better education of the clergy, and, if this can be effected, the priesthood will continue as the natural instructors of their flocks' (p. 182).

Did the Bents actually enjoy themselves on their travels? If they did, they certainly did not make a point of it in their writings. With the exception of their accounts on Patmos (p. 74–86; 152–156) and especially Astypalaia (p. 94–104; 160–163), which they both seem to be very fond of, the rest of their journey is full of complaints; the food, lodging, people, etc. Travelling within the islands on mule or donkey-back, especially in Karpathos, was very hard on Mabel. And navigating the unpredictable waters of the Aegean in what must have been not so comfortable sailing ships, was quite trying. The very fact that they embarked on such a journey is of itself quite admirable! The modern reader of Theodore's and Mabel's travels in the Dodecanese is surely to find something of interest to him or her. One needs to acknowledge that many of the personal biases and prejudices reflected through the Bents' writings are part of a broader socio-historical context; their feelings certainly would have not been considered unusual at that time. Their sentiments as reflected in this collection of writings surely rested well with their intended audience, and thus their candid accounts provide quite an informative, as well as entertaining, vestige of the 19th-century British imperial mindset and its approaches to the antiquities and local people they encountered.

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Multiperiod

Pablo Aparicio Resco. *Entre Aidós Y Peitho. La iconografía del gesto del velo en la Antigua Grecia*. pp. 179, illus. 2015. Madrid: JAS Arqueología Editorial. ISBN 978-8-494-21104-1 €15.

The subject of Pablo Resco's neat and useful study is the artistic development and cultural meaning of the 'veil-gesture' in Greek art. The 'veil-gesture', as I named it back in 2003 in my monograph *Aphrodite's Tortoise: the veiled woman of ancient Greece* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales), is one of the most frequently encountered motifs in Greek art. In fact, there are so many examples that a close study of the motif was well beyond the limits of my work at that time. Resco, drawing closely on *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, has taken the opportunity to expand the investigation of the repertoire of the motif.

To give a brief overview of my original findings: the veil-gesture is usually (but not exclusively) performed by women. The motif is first properly encountered in the early seventh century BCE; and from there on in it becomes a standard part of the artistic repertoire well into the Roman era. Moreover, the motif can be found throughout the Greek world from Sparta to Asia Minor, and from the Aegean islands to North Africa; in fact, Spartan examples are some of the earliest available which suggests that not only was the veil a facet of archaic Lakonian society, but also that the artistic motif may have had its origins in Spartan (or at least Peloponnesian) tradition. The motif always incorporates the gesture whereby a woman raises part of her veil with one arm which she apparently extends in front of her so that the veil forms a large and distinctive flap of cloth which frames her face, although sometimes the gesture is reduced to a mere delicate touching of the veil, particularly in later classical examples. It is clear that painters and sculptors relished the opportunity that the gesture gave them to experiment with the depiction of the hands and fingers and the range of effects that could be created by the veil falling in a variety of folds around the face, head, and shoulders. Furthermore, there are frequent variations on a theme and the veil-gesture is found in many images where the veil is not worn on the head, but instead it can be performed with another article of clothing such as the sleeve of a *chitōn*, a section of the *kolpos* of a *chitōn* or *peplos*, the back or front folds of a *himation* or *pharos* when worn off the head or else it might be performed with an indistinct and ambiguous item of dress—perhaps a veil, a sleeve, an overhang