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Efterpi Mitsi. ***Greece in Early English Travel Writing, 1596–1682.***
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Glorified as the latter-day embodiment of an idealized classical past or denigrated for its irreversible separation from it, Greece has played a major role in the shaping of the modern European imaginary. While western European constructions of ancient and modern Greece from the eighteenth century onwards have attracted a lot of scholarly attention, relatively little has been written about earlier representations of Greece. Besides, scholars specializing in Renaissance studies have tended to focus on Greece as imagined in literature and the theatre rather than as portrayed in the hybrid genre of travel writing, split as it is between fact and fiction and observation and political, ethical or aesthetic reflection. Given such omissions, Efterpi Mitsi's book *Greece in Early English Travel Writing, 1596–1682* (henceforth referred to as *Greece in Early English Travel Writing*) fills a gap in several areas of the humanities, from English and Greek studies to research in history and cultural anthropology.

In her Introduction Mitsi demonstrates that English (and Scottish) journeys to the Ottoman- and Venetian-dominated parts of present-day Greece became more frequent towards the end of the sixteenth century because of significant changes in Europe's political climate and in commercial relations between England and the Ottoman Empire. Attention is drawn to the establishment of the Levant Company in England and the charter of trade signed by Queen Elizabeth I and Sultan Murad III. Because of that charter, *capitulations*, or trading privileges, were granted to English merchants (1). Travellers from England and Scotland journeyed through the Greek lands for diverse economic, political and religious reasons. Apart from merchants, sailors, members of the clergy and adventurers, there were gentlemen of leisure, such as Fynes Moryson, William Lithgow and Thomas Coryat (2). Lithgow, Coryat and the poet and translator George Sandys visited and described some of the famous sites of classical antiquity, which would attract numerous admirers in later times (2). However, Mitsi's aim in *Greece in Early English Travel Writing* is not merely to show "how travel became a means of collecting and disseminating knowledge about ancient Greek sites but also to analyse the construction of Greece and the Greeks" as it emerged in the specific historical and cultural conditions of early modernity (5–6). As the author pertinently observes, such an analysis should go beyond binary oppositions, such as east/west and self/other, and should attempt to do justice to the complexity of "intercultural exchanges and the back-and-forth movement of people, artefacts, texts, and opinions between England and Greece" (6). As this quote shows, Mitsi favours a view of history in which connections, intersections and entanglements play a major role. Such a view has increasingly gained acceptance among scholars in the humanities.

Mitsi's first chapter focuses on the Greek monk Christophoros Angelos (1571/72–1638), who fled from Athens, where he was threatened with conversion to Islam, and eventually found haven in Oxford. In 1617 he published an autobiographical pamphlet in which he detailed his sufferings at the hands of his Muslim captors. Mitsi represents Angelos as an intercultural mediator intent upon forging links between Britain and Greece, and thus gaining sympathy for his oppressed compatriots. By opening her book with a discussion of his pamphlet, she aims at "put[ting] into perspective" the English and Scottish travellers' representations of Greece and the Greeks (9), and thus providing a more balanced view of Anglo-Greek relations. Besides, the monk was apparently one of a number of Greeks who travelled to England in the early seventeenth century. While some Greeks were denounced as "vagabonds" seeking material benefits for themselves by appealing to the sympathies of the English, others made valuable contributions to the study of ancient Greek at Oxford and Cambridge.

Mitsi next dwells on the accounts of two English travellers, who journeyed through parts of the Ottoman Empire in the late sixteenth century. One of them, Thomas Dallam, was commissioned by Queen Elizabeth I to construct and deliver a mechanical organ and clock to Sultan Mehmed III. Not being burdened with a classical education, he took an interest in the modern Greeks, their customs, costumes and food. The other traveller, Fynes Moryson, approached the Ottoman Empire and the Greeks living in it in terms of a cyclical conception of history stressing present-day Greek oppression and contrasting it with the glorious past of ancient Greece.

Chapter four examines George Sandys's *Relation of a Journey* (1615). Sandys was a scholar and a poet, who distinguished himself above all as the translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Mitsi views his portrayal of the sites and ruins of the eastern Mediterranean through the prism of translation. At one level, Sandys emerges as the translator of quotations from classical and Renaissance texts incorporated into his own travelogue (91), while at another, he acts as a mediator between past and present, "pairing actual [places] with literary loci" (94) and presenting both to his readers at home. Interestingly, some of his perceptions of Greece and the Greeks may have been shaped by exchanges with an interpreter with some knowledge of English whom he employed through the later part of his journey (112). As Mitsi remarks, the interpreter "remains unnamed and silent in the *Relation*" (112). A similar attitude to native interpreters and translators is found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British travelogues about Greece and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. *Dragomans*, as interpreters/translators were generally called, were often distrusted and their language skills were disparaged by western travellers. The erasure of their mediating role was also quite common. The figure of the unnamed and silenced Greek interpreter in Sandys's *Relation of a Journey* was in many ways emblematic of later representations of relations between travellers and "travellees" in British writing about the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter five deals with the travels of William Lithgow and Thomas Coryat. The Scottish Protestant Lithgow projects an image of himself as a courageous traveller and something of a pioneer achieving what "was never before achieved by any Traveller in Christendome" (Lithgow, quoted in Mitsi 130). He repeatedly resorts to stereotyping and Mitsi makes an interesting parallel between his largely negative portrayal of Greek women and representations of the ambiguous behaviour of Christian women in popular plays about the Ottoman Empire, which were performed on the English stage at that time (139). Lithgow's pioneering activities apparently did not free him from preconceived ideas about the people through whose country he journeyed.

The Scottish traveller made a point of visiting the ruins of Troy, accompanied by a janissary and a Greek interpreter whose knowledge of the legendary site he (typically!) pronounced to be unreliable. Lithgow committed yet another pioneering act: he put on a Turkish costume and provided a detailed description of himself in it, thus presenting his readers at home with "the early modern equivalent of a tourist photograph" (Mitsi 141).

Coryat also journeyed to the ruins of Troy and was moved by them to meditate on the site's contradictory image in the early modern world in which fact conflicted with fiction and "actual observation [with] mythical perception" (142). For him this visit was what gave his whole journey meaning and he made a point of recommending Troy to "all my Country-men that mean to travell into the world for observation" (Coryat, quoted in Mitsi 146), thus preparing the way for innumerable tourist trips in the future.

The book's final chapter focuses on George Wheler's *Journey into Greece* (1682). A graduate of Oxford, Wheler travelled through Greece in the company of the French doctor and archaeologist Jacob Spon. For Mitsi, Wheler's travelogue played an important role in European perceptions of Greece because it "inaugurate[d] the tradition of the Greek journey whose focal point [was] Athens" (11) rather than more "Oriental" localities such as Constantinople or Jerusalem. Wheler is usually praised for his detailed and accurate account of the monuments of Athens. Mitsi remarks that for him those monuments were "part of a living social environment" (173), and that was also a departure from previous travel writing. According to her, the English traveller contributed to the construction of an image of Greece as "an ideal of beauty, liberty and excellence that [could] be rediscovered and repossessed" (178). Mitsi views this as part of the gradual process of the recognition of "the ruins of Greece [as] the *secular relics of Europe* [my emphasis]" (178). The process in question was to affect the later formation of a modern Greek identity in which special emphasis would be laid on the country's classical legacy. Of course, detecting the lineaments of later political and cultural developments in the work of early modern writers can be misleading, and the author of *Greece in Early English Travel Writing* is well aware of this.

In closing, it must be pointed out that Mitsi's monograph is an important contribution to the study of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travel writing, which challenges us to revise our ideas about intercultural relations in early modern Europe.

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Petar Mateev. Avtobiografiya, spomeni, deynost. Edited by Aleka Strezova and Lyubomir Valentinov Panayotov. Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, 2017. 326. ISBN 978-954-322-907-9

Bulgarian historians have devoted a lot of attention to the founders of modern Bulgarian statehood. Predictably, their research has mostly focused on political figures, who occupied key positions in the higher echelons of executive and legislative power. Such political figures have not only been of interest to professional historians but narratives about them have also found their way into history textbooks and are currently shaping public opinion. However, relatively little is known about people, who remained in the background as the modern Bulgarian state came into existence. Their role in Bulgarian political life still needs to be properly acknowledged and researched.

Petar Mateev (1850–1943) belongs to the latter category. For this reason, the publication of *Petar Mateev. Avtobiografiya, spomeni, deynost* (*Petar Mateev. Autobiography, Memories, Career*) is very timely, and the book fills a gap in specialized research and general knowledge alike. The volume includes an overview of Mateev's life, his own autobiography, a bibliography of his published works and, to most readers' surprise, the translation of the cuneiform clay tablets, which he brought to Bulgaria and presented to the museum in his hometown of Kotel. The translator is the Assyriologist Strahil Panayotov. Aleka Strezova is the author of the impressive introduction, which presents Mateev's life, starting with his family background and education in Malta and at Robert College in the Ottoman capital, and including his administrative career and travels, as well as his activities as a diplomat, journalist and functionary of the newly established Bulgarian state.

Mateev was born on 10 February 1850 to a socially prominent family in the mountain town of Kotel. As he himself admits, he was very proud of his family, which went back for ten generations, and five of its more recent representatives had adopted the honorific title of *hadji.* Interpreted as a mark of social distinction, the title was usually bestowed on wealthy people who had made generous donations to Orthodox churches and monasteries. Notables in Mateev's hometown mostly owed their wealth to successful ventures in the Dobrudja region where they initially reared sheep before tapping the full agricultural potential of its plains. His own family must have had close links with Prince Stephanaki Vogorides (Stefan Bogoridi, Istefanaki Bey), who started life in Kotel as Stoyko Stoykov and subsequently became a high-ranking Ottoman statesman. In addition, they were related to the families of the savant Petar Beron, the revolutionary Georgi Rakovsky and the prominent Ottoman civil servant, historian and jurist Gavril Krastevich. Such contacts would eventually open wide vistas for young Mateev. His father, who was himself a graduate of the Phanar Greek Orthodox College in Istanbul, opted for a different type of education for his son: eleven-year-old Petar was enrolled in the Malta Protestant College, a school administered by the Anglican Church, which was also open to young Bulgarians in search of more advanced modern education. Mateev spent about five years at the College, between 1861 and 1865. When it closed in 1865, he transferred to Robert College in Istanbul at which he studied between 1866 and 1869. His Anglo-American education moulded him into the kind of person who did not fit the negative western stereotype of the demi-Occidentalized Levantine. His competence in the English language would be described as "near-native" today. In addition, he possessed a strong character, a sense of responsibility and firmness of purpose, while also not being averse to risk and adventure. It was probably