

principally because they relate to particularly popular recent historiographical trends, such as debates concerning the limits of the colonial state's coercive ability.

Instead, the sources are multifaceted enough for one to be able to find many different overarching themes to the collection. The theme most immediately apparent to the present reviewer is straightforward: the increasing ambition and remit of the colonial state and, accordingly, the increasing sophistication of colonial policy, particularly after 1918. For example, Volume One, concerning recruitment and training, charts the post-Great War expansion of the civil administration and efforts to replace those Edwardian officials London deemed ne'er do wells with capable graduates, as well as the development of an increasingly scientific approach to the exploitation of African resources ushered in by the formation of bodies such as the Colonial Agricultural Service. Similarly, Volume Five on health and labour shows the growth of efforts made by the colonial state to grapple with the medical implications of an increasingly mobile African populace.

It seems rude to highlight criticisms of a collection that attempts to reflect over half a century of African policy in five volumes but, partly because of the aforementioned overarching theme, and partly because of the present author's own prejudices, it feels that the collection focuses too heavily on the testimony of elites, be they government officials in London, noted experts, or governors and other senior figures within the colonial secretariats themselves. Conspicuous by their relative marginalization are the rank and file civil and military personnel. The editors clearly recognise the value of such figures' material, hence Volume One's extract from the memoirs of Sudan Political Service official H. B. Arber, for instance. Arber gives insights into the tensions between different attitudes towards governance that the proclamations of Arber's boss Sir John Maffey do not. The inclusion of material such as handing over notes, passed from outgoing to incoming district commissioner, and end of year reports, would have shielded the collection from the suggestion that the significance of elite proclamations on systems of governance for on-the-spot policy implementation is revealed more by implication than demonstration. Nevertheless, this is a relatively churlish criticism. *The Government and Administration of Africa* is a very welcome collection.

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LETTERS FROM THE ROAD

The Travel Chronicles of Mrs. J. Theodore Bent. Volume II: The African Journeys.

Edited by Gerald Brisch.

Oxford: 3rdguides, 2012. Pp. xxxii + 344. £27.50, paperback (ISBN 9781905739370).

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Key Words: Exploration/travel, memoirs, sources, white settlement, women.

Amateur archaeologist and explorer J. Theodore Bent (1852–97) and his wife Mabel (1846–1929) spent much of their adult lives trekking through Africa, the Middle East,

and the Eastern Mediterranean in search of antiquities. In 1891, British imperial magnate Cecil Rhodes charged Theodore with surveying the ruins of the mysterious lost city of Great Zimbabwe. Bent's subsequent book, *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (1892), advanced the politically expedient (and racially charged) theory that Semitic people from southern Arabia migrated to the region and established a thriving civilization during the first millennium BCE. Though later debunked by professional archaeologists, Bent's controversial ideas contributed to the European assertion that Africans were wholly incapable of constructing such elaborate stone structures.

In this new publication, Gerald Brisch presents Mabel Bent's transcribed letters and journals from their expeditions in Egypt (1885), Zimbabwe (1891), Ethiopia (1893), the Sudan (1896), and Egypt again (1898). This is the second installment of a three-part series based on significant holdings from the Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies in London. Primarily intended as an account for family members, Bent's writings often lack the intimacy of a personal diary. Nonetheless, her richly detailed descriptions and observations provide a rare glimpse into the experiences of a female European explorer in colonial Africa.

Bent's accounts often read like an exciting Victorian adventure novel from the pen of Rudyard Kipling or G. A. Henty. The most thorough section covers the expedition to Mashonaland (1891) exploring the ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Her diary describes the personal thrill of discovering stone formations and uncovering the now-famous soapstone bird carvings. She also details some of the important methodological procedures at the excavation site – an account that will be of particular interest to historical archaeologists. Another series of letters chronicles a suspenseful expedition into Ethiopia (1893), where the Bents narrowly escape capture by marauding brigands. Throughout these experiences, the Bents interact with a host of notable European figures such as Cecil Rhodes, Randolph Churchill, Reginald Wingate, and Oreste Baratieri – a veritable 'Who's Who' of colonial administrators in Africa.

Despite these notable episodes, the collection's most important component is the rather mundane chronicle of daily life during their expeditions. Bent meticulously details the immense challenges facing European explorers, including difficult terrain and the deleterious effect of disease on both humans and livestock. Indeed, a considerable proportion of her entries discuss the health of various personalities and animals in the expedition. Bent also reveals her attitudes towards African peoples. In her writings, she professes a rather understated disregard for many indigenous practices. For example, she refuses to describe a ritual dance performed by Egyptian 'Dervishes' by simply declaring, 'I shall not describe them as they have been written about by everyone but only say it had a most disagreeable effect on me. I felt as if I were watching some kind of torture.' (p. 7) On another occasion, she summarizes a village in Zimbabwe by explaining, 'We shall soon be quite used to the strange sights we see, but I fear my photos won't be fit to be seen.' (p. 56)

The collection has several drawbacks. As previously noted, Mabel composed these writings for a family audience and she withholds many of her more private thoughts. This will frustrate the modern reader, who yearns for some display of personal reflection. Moreover, Brisch's lengthy and detailed footnotes tend to become rather distracting at times. Despite these minor shortcomings, Brisch and Archaopress have done a major service by reproducing these hidden gems and rescuing Mabel Bent from relative obscurity. This collection is a

valuable primary source and will be of immense interest to those interested in female travelogues, historical archaeology, or the daily experiences of European women in colonial Africa.

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AN ASSEMBLAGE OF INSIGHTS

Teaching Africa: A Guide for the 21st-Century Classroom.

Edited by Brandon D. Lundy and Solomon Negash.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. Pp. viii + 299. \$85, hardback (ISBN 978-0-253-00815-2); \$30, paperback (ISBN 978-0-00821-3).

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Key Words: Teaching texts.

The teaching of African topics across the disciplines has seen a significant expansion over the past few decades, especially in North American, African, and European higher education. Once African-centered courses were found only in those few institutions that offered graduate degrees in African studies. Such courses are now scattered across departments of history, anthropology, literature, economics, and others, at almost every university, including regional teaching institutions and small liberal arts colleges. While African studies no doubt has more growing to do, the expansion to date is certainly a good thing.

In their newly-released volume entitled *Teaching Africa*, editors Brandon D. Lundy and Solomon Negash set out the ambitious goals to help not only expand but also to improve the teaching of African topics. As Lundy states in the very first sentence of the book, ‘This book aims to transform the disparate and often ineffective ways that teachers teach Africa in American higher education and to bridge the knowledge gap between the realities and the perceptions about the continent.’ (p. 1) Further, the editors state that the book responds ‘directly to the ongoing institutional shift from insular to multifocal education in African studies’. To this end, they have collected 22 chapters from 28 contributors. These chapters are further organized into three parts: first, ‘Situating Africa: Concurrent-Divergent Rubrics of Meaning’; second, ‘African Arts: Interpreting the African “Text”’; and, third, ‘Application of Approaches: Experiencing African Particulars’. Notably, each of these parts is presented as part of a Harold Bloom’s tripartite taxonomy of learning, wherein the reader/instructor/student begins with ‘preparation’, proceeds to ‘feeling/heart’, and concludes with ‘a leap ... from theory to practice’.

How successful is *Teaching Africa* in attaining its own stated ends? How useful is it to those seeking to improve and expand their teaching of things African? Overall, the brief individual chapters are well conceived and realized. Perusing the text and reading the chapters which catch one’s fancy will certainly be worth the time of many an instructor and those who choose to read chapters from disciplines other than their own may well