

In the Beginning

Frank Cole Babbitt Esq. (1867-1935), Harvard PhD 1895, was the first Fellow of the School in Archaeology, from 1895-1896. In 1931 he returned as Visiting Professor from Trinity College, which he had brought onto the Managing Committee in 1901. His daughter, Kay Babbitt, has generously loaned the ASCSA memorabilia of her father.

Frank Babbitt's diary, its very brevity testifying to the academic and physical demands of the School program, recaptures the exigencies of travel and accommodations, as well as the pursuit of scholarship, in the late nineteenth century.

But the rewards, as he acknowledges at every turn, were enormous. He was an enthusiastic observer of the first modern Olympic Games, held in the spring of 1896. Babbitt also experienced an Athens which is now lost. "The most wonderful thing about Greece is the clearness of the air," he writes. "The top of Hymettos looks an easy half hour from Souidias St. but it proves to be an hour to the foot, and two more to the top."

In his description of the Acropolis, he notes "Tonight five of us went up to see the Acropolis by moonlight, which softens the ragged outlines of broken marble and produces an impression of how it must have been when the whole was intact. . . One comes home and thinks. And wonders about the Classical Student, who devotes himself body and soul to insignificant fragments of the past of one people, and lets go. . . all else in the world."

Babbitt's first School trips were into Bœotia and he explored the Peloponnese with the legendary Professor Karl Dörpfeld. "The whole school (seven students) started for Bœotia to make the round of Lake Copais", he relates. "The two girls engaged a dragoman to look after them and traveled to Thebes in a carriage: the rest of us by stage, leaving Athens before daylight and reaching Thebes (44 miles) about sunset, much of that time being consumed by the driver stopping at every inn for *krasi*. Eleutheræe with its walls, towers and loopholes, is an imposing site. Is the spring at the bottom of the hill where the shepherd first washed the sons of Antiope?" [Who can answer that one?]

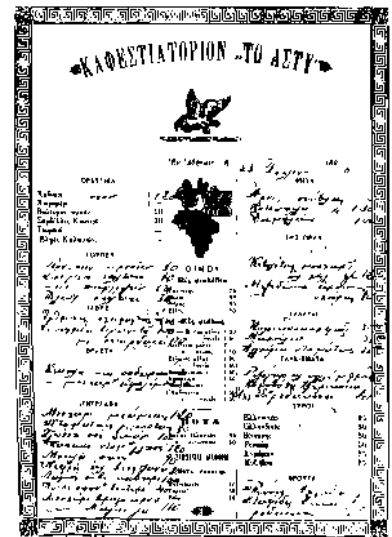
In Thebes, Babbitt tried fastening his sleeping sack around his neck, "but the bugs soon got to work above the line. The only proper way is to draw it over your head leaving only nose and mouth to project. The chamber-boy, when indignantly confronted with an assortment of

large dead critters, replied with a shrug "Δεν είναι τίποτε."

In Zagora, the villagers took great interest in the party. "Among other things, they wanted to know which of the two women was my wife! What was I to do? I could hardly select one of them there and then, and risk incurring the enmity of the other. I could not bear to lower the ladies in the questioners' estimation by admitting that they were indeed traveling about in this way, unmarried. So I simply said that *both* women were my wives. Let America take the consequences. Probably in that village it will be handed down to posterity that all Americans are polygamists! Bed at the end of the day on the floor of the Xenodochion Parnassos in Levadia, nine in a row."

"Pausanias describes the oracle of Trophonios there exactly as it appeared to our inspection. The river bursts right out from the base of the mountain, while farther back is a sort of gently sloping tunnel which gradually gets steeper as the channel goes inside the mountain. Nearby is a large cavern in the rock. Here the initiate was first examined, then, if he was not found wanting, he was made to drink of the two springs, Lethe and Mnemosyne, and finally he was blindfolded and rolled down into the water whose swift current would carry him through this tunnel, out into open air and his waiting friends."

As for Babbitt's tour of the Peloponnese, when you think what antiquities, and in what state of preservation, were visible in Greece in 1896, you appreciate what Classical Archaeology has accomplished in these ninety years! Dörpfeld issued an itinerary, complete with advice on clothing and food. It sounds familiar. Starting from Athens at 7 a.m., all of Old Corinth (much less to see then than now) and Aegocorinth and on to Nauplia, by train. Next day Tiryns, "mit Wagen zum Heraion". . . Argos—theater and town, and train to Tripolis. . . Mantinea, Tegea, Megalopolis, Lykosura, temple and town. . . Bassae, three days at Olympia where the German Institute had begun excavation years before. . . From Katakolo, a "Dampfers, der in die



Nacht nach Itea fährt," whence Delphi for a day, back to Itea, and the Dampfers returned them to Piræus. B. S. Gilderleeve, J. S. Hoppin and B. I. Wheeler were also on this trip.

Much later, back at the School for a year, Professor Babbitt and his wife gave a social "repayment-type" party. Their then 16-year-old daughter recalls the scene:

"Scholars with beards (rare) and several odd languages besides Greek; Fellows and Excavators of all ages and both sexes, looking both tanned and high-minded, distinguished silver-haired wives of ditto professors, also in several languages, children, students and unidentified onlookers, all in a clinking conversational party-roar. We were told that 'Madame Seemann' wanted to meet the American girls, and we were wafted towards the ancient queenly figure on the sofa. This bright-eyed old lady really looked interested to see us, sat us on either side of her black satin lap, saying she was a sort of compatriot of ours: her husband had been an American citizen. So, there we were in Athens and what had we seen of the country? Ah, we had been to Mycenæ? Of course! And she began telling us of excavating there, the hardships, the doubts—familiar themes for archaeologists but her story began to sound even more familiar. 'And I'll never forget,' she went on, 'when we saw the GOLD. . . and my husband said "We have found Agamemnon!"' The American girls flashed a look at each other across the black satin, then back to her animated face, with incredulous joy. 'Madame Seemann' indeed. This was Madame Heinrich Schliemann, Sophia herself!"



2



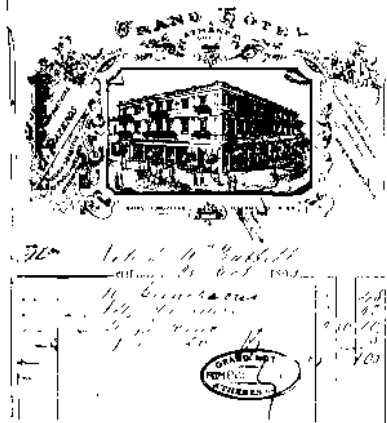
Murray McClellan at Bronze Age burial in Cyprus: in the foreground is a female burial, in the background is that of a Cypriot warrior.

Cyprus Excavation Yields Rare Finds

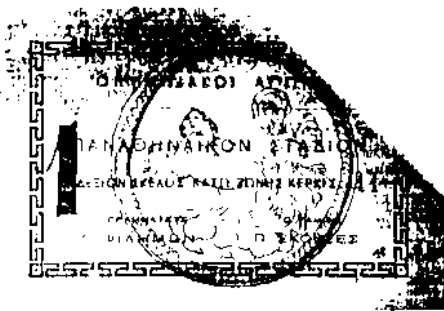
Former School Secretary Murray McClellan and Dr. Pamela Russell McClellan cooperated with the Department of Antiquities in Cyprus this past summer in a salvage dig which has yielded exceptional results.

With the assistance of an excavation team provided by Director of Antiquities Dr. Vassos Karageorghis, the McClellans uncovered several unlooted Bronze Age graves. One contained a woman, with grave goods including an alabaster pot and small mortar and pestle. The second burial revealed a man, whose demise was apparently caused by an infected wound, as evidenced by a jagged hole in his upper right thighbone. His death by violence, and the spear which was interred along with him, are probable indications of the intense disruptions throughout the Eastern Mediterranean in the late second millennium B.C., which brought the Mycenaean Greeks to Cyprus about 1200 B.C.

Murray McClellan, who specializes in ancient glassware, and Pamela McClellan, whose special field is Bronze Age pottery, were to have excavated an early Byzantine site at Kalavassos-Mangia but an irrigation project by the Cyprus Water Department forced a change in plans. During the rescue operation, Pam also received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, in a ceremony observed in Paphos, Cyprus at the home of Dr. Karageorghis.



3

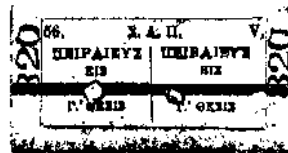


4

Relics of the past: 1. Menu for July 23, 1886, from the Asty Restaurant in Athens; 2. Lottery ticket issued by The Archaeological Service to raise money for excavations and museums, issued in 1895, 3. The bill for 16 luncheons and 14 dinners at the Grande Bretagne Hotel, October 1885, totalling 103 drachmas; 4. A ticket for the first modern Olympic Games, held at the Old Olympic Stadium in Athens in 1896; 5. Bill from the Arcs Hotel in Tripolis, 6. Tickets for the Athens-Piraeus horse railroad; 7. Label from Mantinea wine from Tripolis.



5



6



7

