



ISLAND ATTRACTIONS? TRAVEL WRITING
ON THE CYCLADES FROM THE MIDDLE AGES
UNTIL THE MODERN DAY

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Abstract: The concept of an island as a paradisaical and remote place has a long history in Western culture, most particularly since the Romantic era. While the Cyclades are special places in their own right, the literary metaphors associated with the Cyclades mirror those applied to other island contexts.



INTRODUCTION 

Our fascination with islands is long lived and remains pervasive to the present day. “Islomania,” as John Gillis in *Islands of the Mind* reminds us, “in its many different guises is a central feature of Western culture, a core idea that has been a driving force from ancient times to the present. . . . Western culture not only thinks about islands, but thinks *with* them.”¹ However, our relationship with islands has not always been a straightforward one, and recent endearment (never in itself completely free of negative undercurrents) was preceded by indifference or even repulsion.

The Cycladic islands—the group of Greek islands wedged between southern Greece and the island of Crete (FIGURE 1)—with their heady mix of remoteness, exoticism, myths (many of the Greek gods were born on the islands or interacted with them in some way), archaeological remains (the best known being the holy island of Delos), and divine climate, have long captured the imagination of travelers. However, parallel to the changing relations and inherent ambiguity about islands in general, perceptions of the Cyclades have also undergone several permutations. Emotions such as disinterest, aversion, nostalgia, and intense longing are

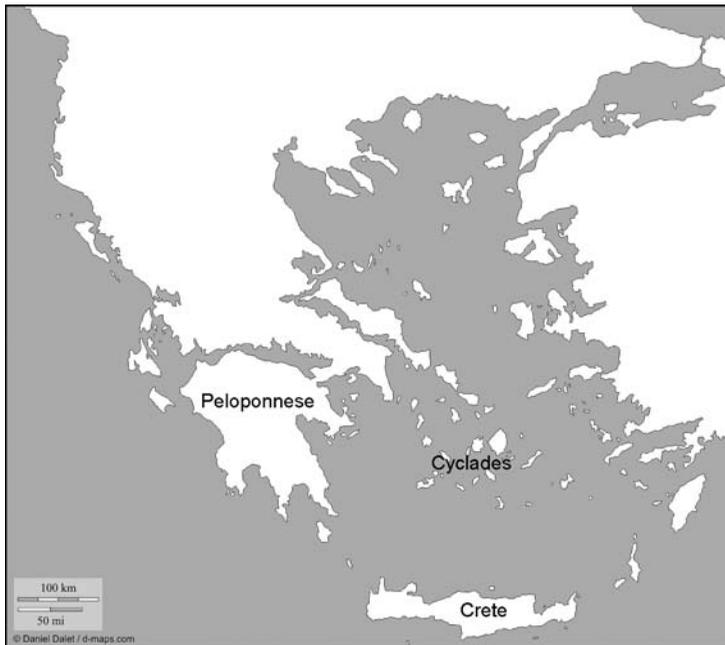


FIG 1. Map of the Cyclades.

all associated with them at various times and reflect wider sociocultural changes. By tracing travelers' attitudes toward the Cycladic islands from the Middle Ages into modern day, this article sets out to illuminate the changing nature of our engagement with these islands in particular and island literature in general. While recurring island tropes (e.g., light, sea, remoteness) can be identified, their use is surprisingly ambiguous. Furthermore, many of these tropes are unique neither to island settings in general nor to the Cyclades in particular. Instead of demonstrating the uniqueness of the Cycladic islands, this article concludes that the colorful travelogues documenting Westerners' travel to these islands are expressions of broader literary trends that are relevant to the entire region; similar emotions and tropes are also directed at other Greek island groups, other Mediterranean islands, the Greek mainland, and indeed the southern Mediterranean as a whole.

MEDIEVAL TRAVELERS

As a consequence of the split of the Roman Empire, the rise of Christianity, and the eventual religious schism in 1054 that divided Christendom into a Western Latin half and an Eastern Orthodox half, Greece became an intellectual and

political backwater. Knowledge of the Greek language, Greek philosophy, and classical culture practically died out in the West, as Latin learning and culture became the new foundations of society. Familiarity with Greek geography also waned as biblical locations were given greater prominence on maps, and travelers from the West no longer visited Greece.² Instead, ecclesiastical and secular envoys, merchants, and an ever increasing number of pilgrims from the West traveled *through* Greece on their way to the Holy Land during the Byzantine and Venetian eras (ca. eleventh to sixteenth centuries). Of the two routes, the southern and more favored one took travelers from Italy through the Southern Aegean with scheduled stopovers at Kythera, Crete, and Rhodes.³ Along this route, it is likely that pilgrims also stopped at some of the Cycladic islands to supplement their water and food provisions. However, traces of these visits are scant in literary sources (e.g., Wilhelm von Boldensele, who visited in 1332, and Niccolo da Martoni, who traveled during the 1390s). It is only toward the end of the fourteenth century (particularly through the influence of the Italian Renaissance) that Western scholars began to appreciate the cultural importance of Byzantine Greece again and to develop an interest in the classical Greek past.⁴ Travel to Greece itself (with the aim of exploring and recording its antiquities) is first documented in the fifteenth century with the *Commentarii* by Cyriac of Ancona (1440s)⁵ and the *Liber Insularum Archipelagi* ([1420] 1824) by Cristoforo Buondelmonti.⁶ Buondelmonti mentions seventy-five islands, only some of which he actually visited himself. He also prepared the first detailed maps of the region, which he presented to Cardinal Orsini in 1420. In addition to providing the very first maps of the Cyclades, Buondelmonti was also interested in the ancient archaeological statues and temples that he describes in detail and interprets according to ancient Greek mythology.

THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

From 1537 onward the Cycladic islands began to be conquered by the Ottomans, with the last, Tinos, surrendering in 1715. Initially, few of the islands were under direct Ottoman administration, and most were controlled indirectly through the old feudal Latin families. Over time, however, all the islands became incorporated into the Ottoman administrative organization. Because they were often ruled from a distance, the Cyclades suffered greatly from pirate attacks in addition to their annual tax obligations.⁷ Despite ongoing pilgrim traffic through the region, the Ottoman conquest and dangerous travel conditions made the islands unattractive to travelers, and the still tenuous links with the West were interrupted for more than a century. From 1580 onward, however, the Ottoman Empire granted

more administrative, financial, and religious liberties to the Cyclades,⁸ and this provided the foundation for the slow resumption of travel to the islands. Examples include the travelogues by de Thevenot (1686),⁹ Struys (1683),¹⁰ Wheler (1682),¹¹ Spon (1724),¹² and Randolph (1687).¹³ These reports offer observations on a wide range of subjects, such as geology, fauna, flora, agriculture, archaeology, and local customs. Given the Enlightenment's focus on reason and objectivity, it is perhaps not surprising to find that personal impressions of people and emotional responses to nature were avoided. As a result, these reports are comparatively dry when set alongside modern travel literature. Nevertheless, they afforded authors an opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the sciences and humanities and allowed contemporaries at home to experience Greece through the writers' eyes.¹⁴

ROMANTIC HELLENISM

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, growing interest in ancient texts, and the discovery of archaeological remains resulted in a growing fascination with the "Idea(l) of Greece."¹⁵ This idealization of Greece is beautifully illustrated by the German art historian Winckelmann, who, despite never having visited Greece, declared the superior humanity of the Greeks based on his analysis of their art.¹⁶ Collective guilt about the conquest of the cradle of Western civilization by Ottoman powers transformed into "an enthusiasm for freeing modern Greeks from the Turkish yoke."¹⁷ Thus, Greece became an imagined nation-state long before its actual geopolitical formation. Traveling to their intellectual and cultural roots became an important activity for British, French, and German writers and painters. As these European travelers describe the environment and its inhabitants, their reports and paintings present a picture of modern Greece that is filtered through the distorting lens of classical antiquity. This idealization of the classical past had wide-ranging intellectual, cultural, and political consequences that continue to govern internal Greek and intra-European discourse to this day. These consequences included an eagerness by Europeans to fight for the liberation of Greece; a search for and, later, removal of antiquities to decorate their palaces and houses at home; a glorification of modern Greeks as "noble savages"; and a perception of Greece as the lost Garden of Eden, accompanied by a missionary tendency (*la mission civilisatrice*) to return modern Greece to its former glory.¹⁸

Although Greece had never been part of the Grand Tour schedule, an ever-increasing number of travelers began to visit Athens and the Peloponnese from the eighteenth century onward to study the remains of the long-idealized

ancient Greece. However, only those who were willing to forego some comforts in an effort to explore lesser-known regions ventured to the Cycladic islands.¹⁹ Among these were Tournefort (1718),²⁰ Riedesel (1774),²¹ Choiseul-Gouffier (1783),²² and Savari (1788).²³ These travelers described and sketched ancient remains as diligently as they noted down observations about local dress, customs, and religious rituals and commented on climate, geography, agriculture, and commerce. A short excerpt from Riedesel's comments about the Cycladic island of Tinos can serve as an example:

Sixty-four villages . . . live off the sea and even learnt how to enrich themselves through trade and commerce. Frequently, men and women make their living as servants in Constantinople, Smyrna and other Levantine towns. Many inhabitants trade with Ancona and Smyrna; others earn their living by leasing their ships and boats. No person is idle on this island. Despite being barren, the soil nevertheless produces more than twenty different types of wine, of which the Malvesian variety is the best; the locals also produce much silk.²⁴

In contrast to earlier times, when travel was reserved for the upper classes, reports from the writers mentioned above indicate that, by the eighteenth century, foreign travel had been opened up to the middle classes. Consequently, the book-based authority of a classically trained scholar was now superseded by that of the eyewitness.²⁵ This new type of traveler reported on a much broader range of topics and placed more emphasis upon experientially acquired knowledge and an open-mindedness of approach demonstrating an awareness of multiple viewpoints. Based on the recommendations for travelers published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* and the *Academie des Sciences*, this type of traveler has since become known as the “voyageur-philosophe.”²⁶

Since they were concerned with the gathering and verification of knowledge, these writers were candid about the obstacles they encountered during their Cycladic travel adventures. Riedesel, for example, complains loudly about the climate of the islands, which he thought too hot in the summer months and too windy year round. In addition, he found the barrenness of the soil, the absence of trees and birds, and the scarcity of fish more pronounced than elsewhere in Greece.²⁷

Closure of the established travel routes and destinations during the Napoleonic Wars (1796–1815) increased the flow of travelers to Greece. The majority of travelers limited their exploration to mainland sites, however, and did not

undertake any excursions to the Cycladic islands. Nassau, for example, preferred to spend a whole day on board his boat rather than step foot on the Cycladic island of Syros.²⁸ Nonetheless, an increasing number of visitors did begin to visit the Cyclades. Among the most well-known are Sonnini (1801),²⁹ Galt (1813),³⁰ Chateaubriand (1814),³¹ Emerson (1829),³² Herold (1839),³³ Fiedler (1841),³⁴ Murray (1845),³⁵ Marcellus (1861),³⁶ and Bent (1885).³⁷

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Romantic approach had partially superseded the factual and detached travelogues. Although these Romantic travelogues continued to inform the reader of local customs, interesting anecdotes, agriculture, industry, nature, history, and archaeology, these accounts were presented in the form of a story—a flowing narrative—in which factual observations were intermingled with personal opinions and evocative descriptions of Greek landscapes. As Scrofani noted, he did not want to make the journey in order to learn, but in order to *feel*.³⁸ It is within this context that texts provide the first signs of an emerging interest in island settings and their potential for fostering that sought-after, emotional, introspective experience.

Nature, in particular, became an important literary device, as writers used nature as a mirror of their soul (creating what Pemble has called “landscapes of the mind”),³⁹ and gushing descriptions of beautiful landscape settings became commonplace. Where nature was enhanced by a picturesque ruin from a bygone era (if possible, accompanied by myths), nostalgia knew no bounds.⁴⁰ This glorification of ancient Greece had one further consequence: travelers were constantly on the lookout for ancient traits, behaviors, and even physical characteristics among the modern Greeks.⁴¹ Like Bent, many travelers believed that the Greeks they encountered in the Cyclades “have remained more or less as they were [in antiquity],” since they had not been exposed to other cultures to the same extent as the Greeks on the mainland.⁴² Furthermore, because they were leaving the stresses of the industrialized age behind, travelers to the Cyclades believed they were getting in touch with an idyllic past world, characterized by a simplicity of life and a oneness with nature.⁴³ Choiseul-Gouffier, for example, believed he had discovered his own Hellenic Garden of Eden on the island of Ios, where everything reminded him of simplicity and innocence.⁴⁴

But because they were so influenced by their own romantic constructs, many of these writers experienced a jarring unease when the present became too removed from the imagined past. Thus, many travelogues display an unsettling ambiguity toward the Cyclades, which were both familiar and foreign, familiar because they, as part of Greece, contained the roots of Western civilization and because travelers were well versed in their ancient history and mythology, foreign because the

Cyclades were part of an unknown region, heavily influenced by Ottoman culture and located at the margins of Europe.⁴⁵ This tension between the familiar and unfamiliar allowed travel to Greece (and hence the Cyclades) to be just exotic enough to become “a form of personal adventure, holding out the promise of a discovery or realization of the self through the exploration of the other.”⁴⁶

ISLAND TRAITS

As summarized in the previous section, pre-eighteenth-century travelogues were primarily focused on reporting facts about people, geology, nature, and culture and were not concerned with the island setting per se. All topics of discussion were treated in the same manner, regardless of whether they related to the mainland or islands. Location was not a noteworthy aspect. This attitude did not change until the end of the eighteenth century, when, inspired by literary Romanticism, writers infused their reports with personal comments and emotionally charged musings on nature. Locational attributes now gained importance and contributed to a traveler’s overall experience. Five attributes, in particular, are consistently associated with the Cycladic islands and warrant a detailed analysis: light, sea, paradise, the past, and remoteness.

Light

*To convey to you an idea of the colour of Greece is impossible, it would be first necessary to shew the sun which glows in these climates.*⁴⁷

*No one I suppose can be better aware than I am of the loveliness of this azure sea, or of the light that plays like music upon its radiant isles.*⁴⁸

*It is indeed an endowment from the gods, to feel a thrill of joy when the eye takes in the gorgeous play of brilliant sunshine, the radiance of colour, and the continuous change of Nature’s multi-farious moods.*⁴⁹

*. . . the delicate air and the sublime light seem to have had their effect in civilizing the commercial, cosmopolitan inhabitants.*⁵⁰

French, German, and British travelers often refer to the luminescent light of the Greek sun and, explicitly or implicitly, contrast it with the familiar cloudiness of

the North (FIGURE 2). Used in opposition to home, this brilliant light symbolizes an escape from the constraints of normal life. However, as Liddell's quote indicates, light was much more than a combination of warmth, sun, and colors; rather, it was a life-changing and civilizing force. The beneficial Mediterranean climate has often been regarded as the true cause of the Greeks' happy disposition and the true creator of Greek art.⁵¹ It is this tranquil but, at the same time, stimulating power of the climate that remains the greatest attraction for modern expats and tourists alike.⁵²

Sea

*[The Cycladic island of] Delos remains one of the most beautiful places in Greece on account of . . . the incomparable colour of the indigo sea.*⁵³

*Lord Byron has done all that Poetry can do, but even he is very far behind; the dark blue sky, the deep blue sea are beyond the reach of art.*⁵⁴

*How can anybody remain indifferent to the loving appeal of a Greek island that seems to float on the surface of the sea, dark blue against a turquoise sky, its image reflected as in a sapphire and emerald mirror?*⁵⁵

*She [a local woman] has never left [the Cycladic island of] Tinos and considered it unbearable to believe that our deliriously happy eyes may not be able to catch sight of the blue sea with its floating islands everywhere we go.*⁵⁶

The glistening blue sea is a recurring topos and, like the light, stands in stark contrast to the gray or green seas of the North (FIGURE 2). As Carl Rottmann's proclamation "how I shall paint Blue in Greece!" evocatively demonstrates, painters in particular were entranced by the unique shade of blue, which remains an essential color in any landscape painting of Greece.⁵⁷

Paradise

*To some of us who most love the Aegean, it is like a type or foretaste of Paradise. . . . Here, more frequently than anywhere else, come those unsought and unseekable moments of penetrating bliss, of Wordsworthian joy and quiet, when 'we see into the life of things.'*⁵⁸



FIG 2. Cycladic impressions. Permission to reprint the images [top left, top right, bottom left] kindly granted by Rod Feldtmann.

It is another property of Aegean landscape, that you can take it away with you. You can live on it in other places, and for months and years afterwards. . . . A love of the Aegean is a perpetual source of refreshment, light and peace.⁵⁹

Just to be afloat in this purple balmy Peace [the Aegean Sea] is foretaste enough of Elysian Fields or Paradise.⁶⁰

Durrell's advice to a friend on how to pack for a holiday on a Greek island (1969) featured the following:

- A loin cloth?
- One pair of very light long trousers made of any lightweight linen.
- (You may find the sun a bit burny).
- A pair or two of shorts.
- A couple of old shirts.
- A pair of sandals or beach-shoes.
- Nothing else.⁶¹

For the visitor, traveling to the islands is like returning to one's roots, distant from the shackles of everyday life and the excesses of modern industrialization.

Here, the eternal rhythm of love, nature, and wisdom can still be heard and encourages an introspection that is not possible elsewhere. The similarities of this vision with tropical islands are made explicit in Durrell's quote by reference to the loin cloth. While based on a real location, the islands ultimately become a utopian concept; the qualities encountered there are spiritual constructs that travelers can draw on as a mental refuge long after their visit has ended.

The Past

*Everything on this ancient earth recalls the triumphs of antiquity, and excites the feeling of deep admiration for the masterpieces of the past, a melancholy that, even today, nourishes this silence and this solitude.*⁶²

*[B]ut in the eyes of others [the Aegean islands are] a fairy-land, marked by resting-places; across which Theseus sailed to slay the Minotaur, and Homer in his blindness . . . took his way singing to the world, and Jason went in search of the Golden Fleece.*⁶³

*All of Greece is absorbing and rewarding. There is hardly a rock or stream without a battle or a myth, a miracle or a peasant anecdote or a superstition.*⁶⁴

*I thought I was transported to the fair days of Greece; these porticoes, this popular assembly, these old men to whom one listened with respectful silence, their faces, their clothes, their language, everything reminded me of Athens or Corinth.*⁶⁵

*. . . These islands, especially the smaller ones, offer unusual facilities for the study of the manners and customs of the Greeks as they are, with a view to comparing them with those of the Greeks as they were.*⁶⁶

The past (classical and mythological) is an ever-present feature of Cycladic island descriptions. Ironically, however, until excavations began in earnest at the turn of the twentieth century, and then more forcefully from the 1960s onward, archaeological remains were relatively rare on the Cycladic islands, being mainly limited to statues, the settlement on the island of Delos, and temple remains. But with many islands intimately linked to deities and heroes, travelers were able to draw on mythology to compensate for the lack of ancient remains. It is through the myths, as well as the statues and ancient buildings, that the Cyclades were able to facilitate access to the past and consequently

allow self-discovery through awareness of the “other.”⁶⁷ Without this ingredient, their spiritual attraction would be considerably lessened: “Perfect travel, for me, demands two qualities in a country—that it shall be full of beauty; and that it shall be full of ghosts.”⁶⁸

An alternative way to access the past was to look for continuities in behavior between past and present. These were easy to find, and writers, as illustrated in the above quotes by Choiseul-Gouffier and Bent, were frequently drawn to make such comparisons.

Remoteness

*It is so dangerous going from Candia [Crete] to the Isles of the Archipelago, on board the shipping of the country, that we durst not attempt it.*⁶⁹

*. . . and now we are storm-stayed on board the Ydra in the harbour of Vathy in [the Cycladic island of] Siphnos, since yesterday at 11 am and no chance of getting away today. The steamer has bad engines, is small and it is very stormy. No post. No telegraph. So we fear our friends will be uneasy about us, we might as well be in [sic] the moon.*⁷⁰

*Still the shame is mitigated by the fact, as I believe it to be, that in those four years my two comrades and myself were the only Americans who set foot upon the [Cycladic] island [of Kea]. It is so near and yet so far, because it is off the beaten track.*⁷¹

*With every stranger wishing to escape from this unhappy [Cycladic] island [of Milos] as quickly as possible, you can image how I am feeling being held hostage here for almost fourteen days. Northerly winds are churning up the sea, white foam as far as the eye can see, and the ear can only hear crashing waves.*⁷²

*Boats, unlike aeroplanes, allow smooth reorientation, on the water one hovers in a void of non-existence between Piraeus and an island while the experiences of Athens or wherever one has come from are effortlessly shuffled off.*⁷³

Essential to a heightened emotional response to both nature and culture was a (perceived) temporal and spatial distance from one’s normal life. This was achieved by venturing to lesser-known regions, by interacting with unfamiliar cultures and actual physical separation. The Cycladic islands, located further

from the mainland than either the Ionian Islands or those in the Dodecanese, were able to offer all of these ingredients. The lack of impressive archaeological remains, important ports or industries, reliable transport links, and fertile soils, combined with the presence of pirates, strong winds, and a mix of Venetian, Ottoman, and native culture, made the Cyclades truly remote—inspiring Mabel Bent to compare her stay on the Cycladic island of Siphnos to being on the moon. While travelers were frequently frustrated and disappointed by this remoteness—especially when set against expectations heightened by Romanticism⁷⁴—the spiritual and physical journey required to reach them was, at the same time, their appeal.

THE ATTRACTION OF ISLANDS

The vast majority of the tropes discussed above are *not* specific either to the Cyclades or indeed Greek islands more generally. Instead, light, sea, paradise, the past, and even remoteness are qualities associated with Greece in general (and indeed, one could suggest, with the Mediterranean as a whole), and comparable associations can readily be found in relation to mainland settings. The following quotation, describing a visit to the ancient religious site of Eleusis, located on the Greek mainland, incorporates many of these qualities:

Light acquires a transcendental quality: it is not the light of the Mediterranean alone, it is something more, something unfathomable, something holy. Here the light penetrates directly to the soul, opens the doors and windows of the heart, makes one naked, exposed, isolated in a metaphysical bliss which makes everything clear without being known.⁷⁵

The fact that travelers to the Cyclades frequently did not vocalize island-specific elements raises the question of whether islands as geographical units—and the Cycladic islands in particular—indeed possess unique qualities. The literary history of islands appears to indicate that this is not the case. Instead, islands seem to act as a reflection of our own desires. Not only do islands take on a meaning only relatively late in our history, but, more important, their meaning is neither prescribed nor constant, but ever changing and historically contingent.⁷⁶ With islands perceived as liminal places—neither fully land nor sea—they became attractive metaphors for thinkers from 1500 onward. The two most dominant categories are those of “utopian” and “paradise” islands that symbolize our greatest fears and desires.

Respectively, they are projections of our hope for a better future (“not yet”) and fear of losing the idylls of the past (“no longer”).⁷⁷ Referring to their remoteness, isolation, and boundedness, islands came to be regarded as microcosms of the world at large, and thus as perfect locations for utopian fantasies where travelers were able to understand social truths more clearly.⁷⁸ Paradisal notions, on the other hand, thrived, reflecting the travelers’ belief that a heavenly afterlife could be achieved on earth. Islands, frequently still untouched by progress and industrialization, and islanders, innocent and able to live at one with nature, became the projections of a heavenly afterlife into the present. This fascination with islands was not limited to tropical ones. The discovery of Tahiti in 1767–68, for example, inspired many travelers and writers.⁷⁹ Travel writing about the Cycladic islands closely mirrors these broader intellectual and literary developments. While the difficult political situation initially delayed exploration, the Romantic movement ensured that the Cyclades soon became associated with an earthly paradise. The combination of a warm Mediterranean climate, ancient myths and ruins, exotic customs, their proximity to Western Europe, and the need for sea travel in order to reach them made the Cyclades a comparatively accessible alternative to the distant tropical island paradise.

As the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, longing for an earthly paradise was temporarily replaced with the actual building of new places, technologies, and inventions. This interruption was short-lived, however. By the end of the nineteenth century, fostered by a desire to escape the negative excesses of industrialization, islands became firmly reestablished as earthly Gardens of Eden. With train routes and steam boats ever increasing in numbers, Capri became the best-known Mediterranean island to provide a more affordable and more easily accessible location for utopian visions. Painters and writers alike gathered there to escape from reality, encounter adventures, and discover their own version of paradise.⁸⁰

A proliferation of island-themed literature is apparent in the early twentieth century, and Paris hosted no fewer than three large exhibitions on Pacific art in 1930 alone. Since then, the attractions of island travel have been increasingly touted by the tourism industry. In their most recent incarnation, island paradises have merged with the ideal holiday, in which we have the opportunity “to get away from it all.” With privately owned islands increasing 10 percent to 20 percent in price annually, the island remains one of the most powerful, albeit ever-changing, metaphors in the Western world.⁸¹ The Cyclades have not escaped the tourist and expat boom. It is estimated that tourism contributes between 50 percent and

90 percent of the islands' regional gross product, and many expatriates have made their home on the Cyclades.⁸²

Some scholars argue that islands would not have been invested with all these layers of meaning were it not for certain features that appear to differentiate them from mainland locales, including the need to travel across water to reach them and their geographical boundedness.⁸³ As Renfrew points out,⁸⁴ islands take on special meaning because they feel remote and necessitate a journey, however short, that removes us from our daily lives and thus creates the phenomenon of "islandness." Or as Baum puts it, "the feeling of separateness, of being cut off from the mainland, is an important physical and psychological attribute of the successful vacation."⁸⁵ This feeling of separateness is most easily experienced on an island. More important, the journey requires us to travel across water, an element qualitatively different from land. Islands—neither land nor sea—are often conceived as liminal places that, by their very nature, promise a different range of experiences.⁸⁶ In addition, islands are the only obvious physical form that has clear and unmistakable edges and can often be explored fully by walking.⁸⁷ Not unlike the popular city holidays, holidays on islands give the illusion of being a microcosm of the world at large and knowable in their totality within a short time span, affording visitors a feeling of an all-embracing, comprehensive experience. This "islandness," however, often becomes no more than a remnant of a literary metaphor, rather than an experienced reality, as tourists travel to islands by plane in order to reach their destination as quickly and directly as possible. Tourists thus frequently negate the very remoteness that originally attracted them to the island location.

"Frequently special, but never unique" is a fitting summary of the history of Cycladic travel writing. Many travel reports have been composed about the Cycladic islands throughout the centuries. While emphasizing local customs, personal stories, and the idiosyncrasies of individual islands, the most enduring impression of Cycladic travel writing is that of comparability with other Western writing about island travel. Instead of Cycladic travel writing being uniquely Cycladic, the fact that similar musings can be found about Greek islands in general, the Greek mainland, and indeed about the southern Mediterranean as a whole indicates that these travelogues are in fact representatives of the literary "island" genre that came into existence with the Romantic period and has remained one of the most enduring genres ever since. It will be fascinating to see what literary guises islands, always reflecting our innermost desires, will adopt in the future.

NOTES

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3. R. Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land: The History and Literature of Travel to Greece* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); E. Malamut, "Travellers in the Aegean Islands from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Greek Islands and the Sea*, ed. J. Chrysostomides, C. Dendrinos, and J. Harris (Camberley: Phyrogenitus, 2004), 181–98; Vin, *Travellers to Greece*.
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6. C. Buondelmonti, *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*, ed. L. de Sinner (1420; Berlin, 1824).
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8. Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*.
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16. J. J. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, 4 vols. (Vienna, 1764), vol. 1, chap. 4.
17. Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land*, 71.
18. Augustinos, *French Odysseys*; Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land*; F.-M. Tsigakou, *Through Romantic Eyes: European Images of 19th Century Greece from the Benaki Museum, Athens* (Alexandria: Art Services International, 1991); D. Wills, *The Mirror of Antiquity: 20th Century British Travellers in Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007).
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