Familiar landscapes in a “strange new country”; British female travel writers in Colonial Cyprus

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British female travel writers in Colonial Cyprus

Esmé Scott Stevenson (1853-1925)
Annie Brassie (1839–1887)
Gladys Peto (1890-1977)
BRITISH FEMALE TRAVEL WRITERS IN COLONIAL CYPRUS

• Esmé Scott-Stevenson (September 1878)
  Wife of Captain Andrew Scott Stevenson, District Commissioner of Kyrenia
  *Our Home in Cyprus*, London 1880.
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  London 1880.

• Gladys Peto, artist (1928)
  Wife of C.L. Emmerson, officer of the Medical Services of the British Army
THE TRAVEL WRITERS:

• Avoid political analysis
• Familiarize their British readership with this “strange new country”
• Describe familiar landscapes
• Similarities with places in Britain (e.g. Devonshire, Richmond Park)

• Images of short, close grass and cattle grazing recall British pastures and meadows
Gladys Peto

- Descriptions of greenery
- Similarities with British landscapes (e.g. abbeys seen in England or France with Gothic ruins and carvings)
- Comparison of the anemones in Cyprus with the anemones in Britain
Annie Brassey

- Similarities with British landscapes (eg white cliffs of Old England)
- Familiar images of trees, crops and streams
- BUT Cyprus often viewed as an infertile land (no green hills, no land suitable for cultivation)
Imagery of the garden

• The garden occupies a prominent place in Victorian ideology
  (“values of privacy, order, taste and appreciation of nature in a controlled environment”, Davidoff and Hall, 2018)

• Cyprus “indirectly or directly portrayed as a garden of the British empire” (Roussou Sinclair, 2002)
• **Esmé Scott Stevenson**  
Cyprus is a garden offering “a curious feeling of freedom”  
A garden without the gardener

• **Gladys Peto**  
Cyprus as a fertile place suitable for cultivation  
She is the gardener – she offers gardening advice
Natural landscape of Cyprus as an ambassador