

Kent Academic Repository

Full text document (pdf)

Citation for published version

Dunstan, Angela (2009) Prior, Melton (1845-1910). In: Brake, Laurel, ed. Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism. Proquest.

DOI

Link to record in KAR

<http://kar.kent.ac.uk/50617/>

Document Version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

Copyright & reuse

Content in the Kent Academic Repository is made available for research purposes. Unless otherwise stated all content is protected by copyright and in the absence of an open licence (eg Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher, author or other copyright holder.

Versions of research

The version in the Kent Academic Repository may differ from the final published version.

Users are advised to check <http://kar.kent.ac.uk> for the status of the paper. **Users should always cite the published version of record.**

Enquiries

For any further enquiries regarding the licence status of this document, please contact:

researchsupport@kent.ac.uk

If you believe this document infringes copyright then please contact the KAR admin team with the take-down information provided at <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/contact.html>

PRIOR, MELTON (1845-1910)

The son of a draughtsman and landscape painter, Melton Prior was born 12 September 1845 in London. He was educated at St Clement Danes Grammar School and Bleriot College Boulogne, France, and formed an unofficial apprenticeship to his father whom he frequently assisted in the studio. Aside from his illustrations for *Penny Miscellany* and *The Sketch*, Prior's career was primarily with the *Illustrated London News* for whom he was an illustrator from 1868-73 and a special correspondent and war artist from 1873-1904. Sir William Ingram, the proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*, sent Prior on his first assignment as a special war artist covering Wolseley's Ashanti campaign in 1873. Prior was then sent on over 24 campaigns for the *Illustrated London News*, covering a remarkable number of conflicts including the 1873 Ashanti war, 1874 Carlist war, 1876 Serbian war, 1877 Russo-Turkish war, 1878 and 1896 Afghan wars, 1879 Zulu war, 1881 Boer war, 1882 Egypt conflict, 1886-7 pacification of Burma, 1896 Greco-Turkish war, 1900 Siege of Ladysmith in the Boer War, 1903 Somaliland campaign, and attempted to cover the 1904 Russo-Japanese war but was prevented from going to the front by the Japanese. Prior also covered several expeditions, from the 1884 Soudan and Nile expedition to the Somaliland expedition of 1903. He accompanied dignitaries on several tours, covering the Prince of Wales' 1875 Athens tour and his 1901 Canadian tour. Claiming to have fought in battle and to have narrowly escaped death numerous times, Prior was particularly vocal in his disappointment at the War Office's refusal to award campaign medals to war correspondents; instead Prior famously decorated himself with the campaign ribbons which he believed he had earned. Prior's illustrations were also featured in publications by other famous specials, including Henry Morton Stanley's *Magdala, the story of the Abyssinian Campaign* (1896) and William Howard Russell's *A Visit to Chile* (1890). Prior was known for his rapid sketching in pencil or ink and his dramatic use of chiaroscuro; though often the effect was lost with the translation of his sketches to engravings. Prior was also notorious for travelling in flamboyant style, and Ingram's payment of his generous expenses became emblematic of the potentially luxurious perks of life as a special correspondent. Whenever Prior was present in England, he attended every state funeral and ceremony and, after his death on 2 November 1910, was honoured with a memorial in the crypt of Saint Paul's Cathedral on 22 October 1912. **AD**

References:

- Carruthers, Jane. *Melton Prior: war artist in southern Africa, 1895-1900*. Houghton, South Africa: Brenthurst Press, 1987.
- 'Melton Prior'. *Scoop Database*. 15 November 2013. <http://www.scoop-database.com>
- Prior, Melton. *Campaigns of a war correspondent*, ed. S. L. Bensusan. London: Edward Arnold, 1912.
- Stanley, Henry M. *Magdala, the Story of the Abyssinian Campaign of 1866-7, with numerous illustrations by Melton Prior*. London: Sampson, Low and Co, 1896.
- Stearn, R. T. 'Prior, Melton (1845-1910)'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. May 2006. 2 June 2014. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35616>.