Review
New Book Chronicle

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Aegean archaeology is not only producing admirable new reports (see the reviews by Susan Sherratt, Jane Renfrew and Oliver Dickinson in *Antiquity* 80 (310) for December 2006), but is also becoming reflexive. Two books in particular, *Mythos* and *Archaeology and European Modernity* probe deeply into the way the past is constructed and consumed. Following this lead, the March 2007 New Book Chronicle explores this theme, taking in along the way books and films that portray or analyse aspects of Bronze Age to Classical Greece and Asia Minor, and completes the armchair tour on the shores of southern Italy and the banks of the Nile and Indus.

Building the past in the Aegean

Pascal Darcque, Michael Fotiadis & Olga Polychronopoulou (ed.). *Mythos: La préhistoire égéenne du XIXè au XXIè siècle après J.-C. Actes de la table ronde internationale d'Athènes, 21-23 novembre 2002* (Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, Supplément 46). iv+400 pages, 56 illustrations. 2006. Athènes/Paris: Ecole Française d'Athènes/De Boccard; 2-86958-195-5 paperback €80.

Y. Hamilakis & N. Momigliano (ed.). *Archaeology and European Modernity: Producing and Consuming the 'Minoans'* (Creta Antica 7). 296 pages, 62 illustrations, 1 table. 2006. Padova: Aldo Ausilio/Bottega d'Erasmo; 978-88-6125-007-9 paperback.

Lyvia Morgan (ed.). *Aegean Wall Painting: A Tribute to Mark Cameron* (British School at Athens Study 13). 250 pages, 24 colour plates, 186 b&w illustrations, 7 tables. 2005. London: British School at Athens; 0-904887-49-9 hardback £79.

Clairy Palyvou. *Akrotiri, Thera: An Architecture of Affluence 3,500 Years Old* (Prehistory Monograph 15 of the Institute of Aegean Prehistory). xxviii+210 pages, 257 illustrations, 10 colour plates, 4 tables. 2005. Philadelphia (PA): Institute of Aegean Prehistory Academic Press; 1-931534-14-4 hardback £40.

Martin M. Winkler (ed.). *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic.* xi+236 pages, 20 plates. 2007. Oxford, Malden (MA) & Victoria: Blackwell; 1-4051-3182-9 hardback £55 & $74.95 & AUS$165; 1-4051-3183-7 paperback £19.99 & $29.95 & AUS$48.95.

Stephen L. Dyson. *In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts: A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* xvi+316 pages, 40 illustrations. 2006. New Haven & London: Yale University Press; 978-0-300-11097-5 hardback £30.

Craig A. Mauzy with John McK. Camp II. *Agora Excavations 1931-2006: A Pictorial History*. 128 pages, 267 b&w & colour illustrations. 2006. Princeton (NJ): American School of Classical Studies at Athens; 0-87661-910-3 paperback $15, £9 & €15.

Susan I. Rotroff & Robert D. Lamberton. *Women in the Athenian Agora*. 56 pages, 71 b&w & colour illustrations. 2006. Princeton (NJ): American School of Classical Studies at Athens; 0-87661-644-9 paperback $4.95, £3.50 & €4.95.

Carol L. Lawton. *Marbleworkers in the Athenian Agora*. 52 pages, 58 b&w & colour illustrations. 2006. Princeton (NJ): American School of Classical Studies at Athens; 0-87661-645-7 paperback $4.95, £3.50 & €4.95.

Mythos and *Archaeology and European Modernity* should be read in tandem, and both make thoroughly engrossing reading. These two symposia, one held at the French School in Athens in 2002 (Darcque, Fotiadis & Polychronopoulou), the other in Venice in 2005 (Hamilakis & Momigliano) pursue similar lines of enquiry: the emphasis of the French volume is more historiographical and considers a longer time span (Neolithic, Minoan, Mycenaean) and wider area (to include parts of the Balkans, Asia Minor and Cyprus), the Italian/British collection is more overtly concerned with how Minoan archaeology fits the modern European agenda, from discovery, through interpretation, to current public perception. The overlap – some authors, such as

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Momigliano and La Rosa, contribute to both volumes – is welcome, as it allows us to discover the multiplicity of approaches to Aegean prehistory. Taken together, 43 authorities from Greece, Italy, France, Britain, the USA and other European countries probe into every aspect of the construction of the Greek Bronze Age, from the heydays of discovery in the later nineteenth century to its impact on the minds of the public, then and now, academic and general. All is captivating: excavations and turf wars between archaeologists, forgeries, music, Greek and English literature, the Greek press, *fin de siècle* artistic currents, Freudian analysis, the Italian cinema, Victorian landscape gardening and hygiene, political upheavals and the teaching of 'the Minoans' in Cretan primary schools. Each contribution (29 in Darcque *et al.*, 16 in Hamilakis & Momigliano) helps to put archaeology in the mainstream of the artistic, intellectual and political currents washing over Europe from *c*. 1870 to 2000, a treat all too rare in archaeological literature. The papers cannot be summarised here, but I recommend thorough browsing: many articles are written by the big players in Aegean archaeology, and there is also a characteristically stimulating paper by Andrew Sherratt† (*Archaeology and Modernity* is dedicated to both Sherratts).

Amongst the contributions to *Archaeology and European Modernity* figures Blakolmer's appraisal of the European Modern Style and its impact, if any, on the perception of the art of Bronze Age Crete. The potency and ambiguity of images that have filtered down to us from Minoan times is illustrated by that iconographic and cultural dog's breakfast, the 'Priest King' or 'Prince of Lilies' from Knossos. Here we have a figure, assembled from painted relief fragments by a late Victorian British visionary (Evans), reconstructed by *Jugendstil*-inspired Swiss restorers (the Gilliérons), deconstructed by many specialists, seen by millions of tourists and re-enacted for the opening ceremony of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games by an actor looking, most alarmingly, like Michael Jackson in a codpiece (fig. 9.8, p. 157 in *Archaeology and European Modernity*). Let us just be thankful that Mel Gibson, of which more below, has not (yet) thought of a Minoan epic spoken in Homeric Greek, complete with sacrifices of children, erupting volcanoes, bare-breasted snake-brandishing priestesses and the goring by bulls of leaping maidens, saved *in extremis* by the arrival of Theseus.

Complex imagery is the subject of *Aegean Wall Painting*, a collection of 13 articles edited by Lyvia Morgan, written in tribute to Mark Cameron, scholar of Knossos and of Aegean art who died in 1984, aged 45. Amongst many insights – for example on continuity (Chapin), female and male imagery (Warren and Marinatos respectively), Mycenaean symbolism (Morgan), naturalism *v*. convention (Immerwahr) and techniques (Jones) – two elements emerge: first, as Mark Cameron has demonstrated, that very delicate contextual analysis has to be applied to fragmentary images. Taking the example of the 'Priest King' again, Sinclair Hood (p. 68) warns us that 'a good deal of speculation [exists] about how the fragments of this fresco relate to each other and what they represented'. These could be of different people, of different gender, possibly from different floors, but probably from Late Minoan IB contexts. The second element is the wide geographical distribution of Minoan wall paintings, as far as Tell al Dabᶜa in the Nile delta and Tel Kabri (Israel) which Morgan and Bietak ascribe directly to Minoan artists, not minoanising ones; they are 'convinced that the painters were using quintessentially Aegean motifs in Aegean idiom' (p. 43), though the artists adapted scenes to local environments. This has profound implications for our understanding of the relationships that existed between the Aegean, the Levant and Egypt, not least the directions of flow, and of a shared knowledge of the meaning displayed in the imagery.

Exact provenance and chronological position is better circumscribed at *Akrotiri* on the Cycladic island of Thera (Santorini). This harbour town, brought to the world's attention by S. Marinatos between 1967 and 1974 and later by Christos Doumas, opens a unique vista on how a Minoan town was built, preserved under 7m of volcanic deposits resulting from an eruption dated to 1525 BC (or 1645 BC). Presented and analysed with admirable clarity by Clairy Palyvou, *An Architecture of Affluence* shows us the concept, design and build of typical houses and public structures organised around public spaces and a network of streets provided with communal drainage. Palyvou had 10ha of excavated area (perhaps 10 per cent of the urban fabric) and 35 houses, many surviving to three storeys, to play with. What emerges is twofold: wealth and, still, dearth. Wealth, not only of the inhabitants of Akrotiri, which the author links directly to Crete and Knossos, but also in detail: house types, internal organisation, circulation via staircases, storage spaces, private, public and ceremonial spaces, drainage, sanitation (including an

inside loo on an upper floor), wall paintings, furniture and, above all, the use of half-timber technology to cope with a seismically turbulent environment can be reconstructed with much accuracy, using excellent graphics. What this wealth shows up even more starkly is how much we are still missing. Partly because Akrotiri is not an Aegean Pompeii, its inhabitants having had time to remove or store their belongings, and partly because much of life might have happened on the roof, which even Akrotiri cannot restitute. The book thus offers an elegant architect's view and yet seems empty of people. The latter is a hackneyed objection laid at the door of many an architect, and Palyvou works hard to people her town, particularly in her description of the inhabitants' response to two seismic cataclysms (p. 175-8). So perhaps we should blame the inhabitants of Akrotiri for being highly organised and for not dying more dramatically.

The portrayal of myths in films is what Martin Winkler examines, together with 11 other Classicists, in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic*, focusing on *Troy*, the 2004 film by Wolfgang Petersen. The book, on the whole, endorses Petersen: one contributor after another stresses that Petersen did not try to adapt the *Iliad* but made a new *Troy*, adding just another layer to a myth that had already acquired more than its fair share of interpretative strata. To point out inaccuracies or anachronisms is 'inappropriate', the point being that 'Petersen has understood Homer'; by making a popular movie 'he did the only right thing' (Latacz, p. 42). At the heart, there is a 'kernel of truth', a 'historical substrate' contends Manfred Korfmann (†2005), the director of the *Troia Projekt*: Troy VI-VIIa came to an end around 1180 BC, most probably in a war. The liberties taken with Homer's story must be understood in terms of the film's own perspective, Petersen's creation must be judged by the criteria of the seventh art alone (see the chapters by Winkler, Salomon, Shahabudin, Scully and Ahl). So epic blockbusters are not primarily meant to educate; as I write, Mel Gibson's Mayan gore-fest is erupting on British cinema screens, arguably setting a tale in the 'wrong' context and sending the 'wrong' message. So what? says the film critic Cosmo Landesman in *The Sunday Times* (31 December 2006): *Apocalypto* 'is bloody fantastic . . . The whole film looks authentic; it smells authentic'. Readers of *Antiquity*, and our correspondent Stephen Houston, who along with other Mesoamericanists has entered the fray (covered by the *Washington Post* in December 2006), may beg to differ. After all Rudy Youngblood is going to attract vast crowds, whose vision of the past will inevitably be coloured by Gibson's world view. So can or should archaeologists get it right for the producers? Too busy hedging, qualifying, telling everyone what we don't know, is our insistence that the past is a construct backfiring? Contributors to *Troy* make the point that in films you cannot leave convenient blanks, you need sets, costumes, the works; and if authenticity suffers, 'dramatic success matters more than the archaeological accuracy of Helen's hairpins' (Fitton, p. 106). I believe the argument is not so much about accuracy of detail or solving chronological conundrums than about projecting the archaeological big picture. And here archaeologists have a lot to do and courage will be needed: *haute vulgarisation* is indeed a high-wire act.

We reach somewhat calmer waters with Stephen Dyson's *In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts*, a history of Classical archaeology, after Winckelmann, Goethe or Piranesi (Chapter 1). The six remaining chapters treat Napoleon's imperial ambitions and the development of Roman, Etruscan and early Christian archaeology in nineteenth-century Italy, France, Germany and colonial North Africa (Chapter 2); neoclassicism, romanticism, the nationalist awakening of modern Greece and the role archaeology played in it (Chapter 3); the period between *c*.1870 and 1914 in Rome, the Roman provinces, Greece and Asia Minor, with the establishment of major 'national' projects – for example the Germans at Olympia – and the rise of museums and Greek vase studies up to the 1930s (Chapters 4 and 5); colonialism and the (ab)use of archaeology in the nationalist agenda of the inter-war period in Italy and Greece (Chapter 6); the book ends with the period 1945–*c*. 1970 which saw the growth of multidisciplinary international projects (Settefinestre, Carthage) and the adoption of new approaches, to include aerial photography, the Etruria survey, underwater archaeology or the understanding of whole urban sequences. The narrative, with thumb-nail sketches of the main protagonists, projects and currents, is well-informed, though at times it lacks pace (and a little more care could be taken with French and German spelling). The book is enhanced by good black and white portraits which Dyson uses to highlight his themes: amongst them the role of women in Classical archaeology (p. 152-4), the place of the dilettante (or savant, as Dyson likes to call them), the gradual divorce of Classical archaeology from art history, the *sventramento* –

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literally disembowelling – by large-scale clearances in Mussolini's Rome and the Athenian Agora, and the importance of photography in the development of the discipline.

Photography takes pride of place in the wonderfully illustrated *Pictorial History* of the *Agora Excavations 1931-2006* by Craig Mauzy, telling in striking images the progress of excavations, recording, (re)construction and landscaping of the Agora, at the foot of Athens' Hephaisteion. From pioneering days in the 1930s, with horses and carts and hundreds of workmen, to its mature, verdant state (in April) as an archaeological park 75 years on, the book gives a sense of developing techniques and changing priorities in archaeology, conservation and presentation. The documents, including extracts from site notebooks and correspondence, and the photographs are well chosen; the latter use to great effect the juxtaposition of similar views in the 1930s, the 1950s and the present. There are just a couple of minor complaints about the book's otherwise first-class design: better scaling and cropping of the general views would have helped, as would the inclusion of a general plan more detailed than the single schematic plan shown in Figure 10. Otherwise, this is an excellent way to present the work of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. They certainly did not mess about: vast areas were cleared and excavated, and the reconstruction, almost from scratch, of the 116m long Stoa of Attalos (second century AD) as a museum in 1953-6 or of the Byzantine church of the Holy Apostles were huge undertakings. Fifty years later, the shock of clearance and new buildings is much softened by planting, thanks to the vision of the landscape architect Ralph Griswold. The human element in such a project is of course vital and is celebrated with American gusto here: more than 500 volunteers are listed by name at the end of the book, while the main protagonists are presented in text and portraits. Amongst them feature many strong women, including Alison Frantz. It is to her skills in photography that some of the best pictures in the book are owed.

The women who excavated the Agora also feature in one of two recent booklets from the 'Excavations of the Athenian Agora' picture book series, *Women in the Athenian Agora* (No 26). The modern women, described as the excavation's 'despinocracy', are at the end of a long line of women who 'in their different ways made their mark as women in the Athenian Agora' (p. 55). To counter the view that Classical women belonged to the household, Rotroff & Lamberton use illustrated material from the excavations to propose that the male/public and female/private dichotomy may not be as clear cut as all that. *Marbleworkers in the Athenian Agora* by Carol Lawton is the other new booklet (No 27), illustrating a selection of the 3500 pieces of sculpture found there. Short summaries of the evidence for workshops are followed by a selection of their products. The inclusion of many pieces or copies of Hellenistic and Roman date serves to remind us that, although we may think of the Agora as a Classical institution, it continued to function as a public space well into the first millennium AD.

. . . and elsewhere

Francesca Franchin Radcliffe (ed.). *Paesaggi sepolti in Daunia; John Bradford e la ricerca archeologica dal cielo 1945/1957*. 228 pages, 62 b&w & colour illustrations. 2006. Foggia: Claudio Grenzi; 978-88-8431-201-3 paperback £18 +p&p.

Brenda Moon. *More Usefully Employed: Amelia B. Edwards, writer, traveller and campaigner for ancient Egypt* (Egypt Exploration Society Occasional Publication 15). xvi+320 pages, 38 illustrations, 4 colour plates. 2006. London: Egypt Exploration Society; 0-85698-169-9 hardback £35.

Nayanjot Lahiri. *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization was discovered.* xiii+363 pages, 45 illustrations. 2006. Oxford, New York & Calcutta: Seagull; 190542218-0 hardback £29.99 & $45.

The books reviewed so far reflect collective and cumulative endeavours. Rarely can an individual add more than a few bricks to the wall. But John Bradford almost single-handedly added a whole wing to the edifice, with a little help from the RAF, in his groundbreaking aerial survey of the Tavogliere di Foggia in Puglia at the heel of Italy in the 1940s. Between 1945 and 1947 alone, some 200 Neolithic, Roman and medieval sites came into view. Bradford's – and initially Williams-Hunt's – discoveries were reported in *Antiquity* in 1946, 1949, 1950 and 1957. This talented, quixotic archaeologist was at odds with another brilliant landscape archaeologist, John Ward-Perkins, and his biography (by Francesca Franchin Radcliffe) in *Paesaggi sepolti in Daunia* brings out the achievement and human frailty of Bradford. *Paesaggi sepolti* is a re-edition in facsimile and in translation of the *Antiquity* articles, as well as some others. This beautifully presented bilingual book,