Art and Archaeology

Some years ago it was fashionable to discern a 'Great Divide' in the study of the past. An intellectual fault line was presumed to separate, dramatically, the disciplines of 'Archaeology' (as practised in departments of Archaeology) and 'Classical Archaeology' (as harboured, by custom, in departments of Classics). Inheriting elements of the so-called 'Two Cultures' rift between 'the sciences' and 'the arts' created in the late 1950s, this division offered stock caricatures on both sides. In the eyes of the 'archaeologists', the traditional Classical archaeologist was essentially preoccupied by some whimsical pursuit of artistry in the ancient world – unable to see beyond an arrangement of forelocks on the brow of Augustus, or obsessed with those delicacies of style on an Athenian vase that enabled the invention of a particular minor genius ('The Elbows-Out Painter'). Conversely, the archetypal scholar of Classical art would regard exponents of 'the New Archaeology' as little more than charlatans – purveyors of diagrams, polysyllables, and puffs of theoretical hot air. To this day, one can think of certain figures who still more or less conform to these extreme types. But the Great Divide itself has closed: and that is a process of reconciliation which owes much to the efforts of Anthony Snodgrass, Emeritus Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge University. As anyone who knows him will be aware, Snodgrass is not the type to inflate his own academic importance. But it is with a due sense of personal justification that he introduces *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*, a collection of his writings spanning some four decades of research.[1] Back in 1968, when David Clarke's *Analytical Archaeology* first appeared, Classicists proudly set Homer above pie charts – while for their part world prehistorians preferred to ignore the extraordinarily generous database of excavated Bonze Age sites in the Aegean area. Snodgrass describes himself as 'working across the grain of the subject' rather than 'swimming against the tide', but neither metaphor seems quite right for the luminary route he took into 'the Greek Dark Ages' and beyond. The language of battle is tempting – yet what underpins the various papers reprinted here is the author's judicious sympathy with both sides of interdisciplinary strife. So while he may, for example, extract absolute historical significance from the distribution record of particular objects made from bronze or iron, this is not done with a view to ridiculing those scholars who cherish Homer as a prime source of historical information; for it is clear that Snodgrass himself has a strong sense of Homer's poetic identity, and elsewhere we will find him using that same literary sensibility to argue against those who want to find the origins of Greek figurative art in a series of supposed 'illustrations' of Homeric epic. Throughout the various thematic groupings of the book – the Great Divide itself, the early Iron Age in Greece, the formation of the *polis* and its military organization, early Greek art, and archaeological survey – there is an evident relish for debate, which signals what Snodgrass has done so much to achieve: ensuring that Classsical archaeology is not marginal to either Classics or archaeology, but of core concern to both. As if to confirm that statement of faith, a number of recent publications may be summoned for notice here. *Mediterranean Urbanization 800–600 BC*, edited by Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe,[2] shows the Snodgrass factor by its

[1] *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece. Collected Papers on Early Greece and Related Topics (1965–2002)*. By A. M. Snodgrass. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 485. Hardback £60.

[2] *Mediterranean Urbanization 800–600 BC.* Proceedings of the British Academy, 126. Edited by Robin Osborne and Barry Cunliffe. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. xiv + 279. Hardback £40.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383507000228 Published online by Cambridge University Press

very title: though the geographical range includes Phoenicians, Etruscans, and others, the fact that we know of something like a thousand cities founded by the Greeks makes the definition of the *polis* an obvious point of reference for the Mediterranean generally. And even if the possibility is here mooted that living in cities could be a matter of 'fashion', all the contributors to this volume unite in appreciating the importance of 'extramural' archaeological data. As Snodgrass pointed out, 'the territorial aspect is at once the most basic and most neglected element of polis organisation' – but thanks in no small part to the example of his own survey work in Boeotia, that neglect has now been remedied. This point is proved *par excellence* by the twenty-five year project conducted by J. C. Carter and the University of Texas to explore the *chora* of the colony of Metaponto. Carter and his colleagues (from many different scientific disciplines) have been prompt in divulging the results of their work, making the Metaponto Project already something of a modern classic. Now, in *Discovering the Greek Countryside at Metaponto*[3] – saluted on the back cover by Snodgrass himself as the 'prime showpiece' of 'unveiling the ancient landscape . . . the greatest recent achievement of Mediterranean archaeology' – a single text makes newly available the unusually diverse results of the project. The basic message of most field surveys around the Mediterranean is, of course, that the settlement of rural areas was, even allowing for periodic fluctuations, far more dense than we would otherwise have supposed. But investigations of the Metaponto Project have gone much further than simply proving that point. Metaponto the polis was founded in the seventh century BC by colonists predominantly from the north-west Peloponnese. Assuming that among the attractions of the site were its agricultural potential and a more or less friendly reception from existing inhabitants, it seems entirely valid for the archaeologists to pursue the key questions of how land was allotted among the newcomers – and to what extent (if any) there was interbreeding between indigenous people and colonists. The technical strategies developed by Carter and his team in their search for answers are elegantly explained and justified in this book (which stems from Carter's Jerome lectures at Ann Arbor in 2000). And not only are the daily lives of farmers in the ancient world made vivid by the sympathetic and systematic study of their homesteads and terrain, but the Texans have not shied from satisfying what one might call popular curiosity: taking the time, for example, to make facial reconstructions of certain Metaponto settlers based on their skeletal remains. The absolute historical value of the entire enterprise can hardly be overstated: when so many books about the Classics recycle what we already know, here is a (well-illustrated) volume brimming with fresh evidence and unfamiliar insight. Surveying the Mediterranean landscape is not always easy and idyllic. Russell Meiggs, in the preface to the first edition of his *Roman Ostia*, admits that his attempt to make 'an unorthodox entry' into the private grounds where the remains of Trajan's harbour lay 'ended . . . in humiliation'. Whether he was arrested, set upon by hounds, or simply ripped his trousers on a fence, we are left to speculate. But a concluding chapter of the book's second edition signals the opening up of all sorts of archaeological possibilities in and around Ostia in the early 1970s; and now we have confirmation of Meiggs' hopes in

[3] *Discovering the Greek Countryside at Metaponto.* Jerome Lectures, Twenty-third Series. By Joseph Coleman Carter. Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press, 2006. Pp. xxviii + 287. Hardback £55.50.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383507000228 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Portus,[4] an Anglo-Italian (but wholly Anglophone) report on intensive survey conducted with a primary aim of clarifying the structure and function of the grand Trajanic plan for a port that would serve not only as economic hub to the great wheel of empire, but also a symbol of Rome's logistical genius. Passengers on flights in and out of Rome's Fiumicino airport will often be granted a clear aerial view of the inland hexagonal docking area created perhaps by Trajan's innovative Greek architect, Apollodorus. But how were goods – notably the staple foodstuffs originating from Rome's provinces in Egypt and north Africa – stored and moved onwards to the capital? Using magnetometers to sense the existence of foundations no longer apparent on the surface, the teams of researchers (prominent among them Martin Millett, the successor to Snodgrass at Cambridge) have elucidated the ancient practicalities of warehousing and canal systems around the hexagon, while keeping sight of its symbolic purpose. As Anna Gallina Zevi, current Soprintendente of Ostia, remarks in her overture to the book, 'modern landscape archaeology' cannot solve all of the problems involved in our understanding of Rome's imperial organization. But this survey of Portus shows, once again, the unique potential of Classical archaeology to augment, qualify, or even contradict our historical tradition.

doi:10.1017/S0017383507000228 NIGEL SPIVEY

[4] *Portus. An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Imperial Rome*. By Simon Keay, Martin Millett, Lidia Parioli, and Kristian Strutt. Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome, 15. Rome, The British School at Rome and The Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Ostia, 2005. Pp. xviii + 360. Paperback £49.50.

Religion

It must be mere fancy, but since *L'Année philologique* abolished their lemmata *Histoire religieuse*. *Religions et mythologie grecques et mycéniennes/Religions et mythologies romaines et italiques* in favour of *Religions. Religion grecque/Religions de Rome et de son empire* in vol. 67 (1999) there seems to have been a decline in the number of offerings on mythology. Perhaps such items have only migrated to other categories such as 'mentalités et vie quotidienne' or 'vie intellectuelle et artistique', but it is not unthinkable that, after twenty years of post-structuralist eclecticism, the intellectual attraction of working on myth has diminished. However, the university curriculum, especially in the United States, has an inertia of its own, and will presumably continue to evoke introductions and *prises de position* for years to come. Among students taking such courses, Eric Csapo's entertaining and well-written *Theories of Mythology*, the fruit of long experience at the University of Toronto (he now teaches at Sydney), is likely to be in pretty constant demand.[1] The introduction makes three excellent points: that theories of myth have no privilege but are best themselves seen as (new or re-) mythologies of the tales they purport to account for; that in place of failed essentialist definitions we need, if anything, polythetic ones; and that theories of myth, from their origins in Herder's romantic nationalism (Vico and Heyne make no appearance here), always have hidden agendas. This sets the stage for his own preliminary Greimasian definition, that myth is a narrative considered important in a specific society, and told in such a way as to allow the collectivity (he prefers 'collective' as in *kolkhoz*) to share a sense of that importance. The book provides an always

[1] *Theories of Mythology*. By Eric Csapo. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Pp. xiii + 338. Hardback £60; paperback £17.99.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383507000228 Published online by Cambridge University Press