

BOOK REVIEW

Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece. By ANTHONY SNODGRASS. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 485. Paper, \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-8014-7354-8.

This collection of 25 studies brings together Anthony Snodgrass' work over four decades. But it is more than a collection of previously published essays, for it provides the author's fresh thoughts on the subjects of those essays. Thus it reveals developments in the field of Ancient Greek archaeology during the period of major new directions in the second half of the 20th century. Snodgrass speaks to historians and classicists as well as to archaeologists, encouraging rapprochement between the various groups working to understand the nature of ancient Greece.

Following the Preface, the essays are distributed among six parts that identify the author's special interests and contributions to Greek history:

- "A Credo" examining the history of archaeology, its relation to other disciplines and a plea for redirection
- "The Early Iron Age of Greece"
- "The Early Polis at Home and Abroad"
- "The Early Polis at War"
- "Early Greek Art"
- "Archaeological Survey"

Each part begins with a short introduction presenting changes in evidence and/or interpretation, and includes two or more essays. Every essay in turn receives an introduction describing the intent of the original study, pointing to aspects requiring updating, and providing a bibliography of important recent publications on the topic. S. reports how new findings have altered his opinion or, in several cases, why his original argument is still justified. He has, for example, revised his position on a return to nomadism following the collapse of the Mycenaean kingdoms, as well as his view of the rise in population in the 8th century. On the other hand, with respect to the transition from bronze to iron, while "sympathetic to correctives yet in this instance, I resist" (p. 127).

S.'s "Credo" is important for an appreciation of developments in the field of archaeology as well as its battle with the domains of historians and classicists. Convergence with both disciplines has long been linked with ancient written sources, a link that excludes much of human history. Yet, if classicists and historians frame their questions broadly, in terms of processes over time, cooperation is both possible and productive. "The larger aim of this paper is to convince

historians that archaeological evidence can truly be brought to bear on problems that are of central concern to them..." (p. 222). Some of the author's more acerbic comments relate to lack of empathy: "this paper was addressed to fellow Classicists who did not, as I had half expected, take offence..." (p. 364).

Above all, S. gives attention to the material evidence for changes in culture after the difficulties of the Late Bronze Age, the development of the polis, the emergence of hoplite warfare and the lessons of pottery—both painted and plain—and other art. Readers can follow the process of deepening understanding through comparison of the original studies and the author's introductory comments. For example, the 1974 study "Metalwork as Evidence for Immigration in the Late Bronze Age" is described in the introduction as "a journeyman piece" (p. 118). It employs close examination of particular metal items and technology to address the migrationist explanation of the divide between the Bronze and Dark Ages. The 2002 discussion of "The Rejection of Mycenaean Culture and the Oriental Connection" builds on these findings to argue a more sweeping conclusion: on the collapse of most Mycenaean centers and their administrative structures, Greece returned to the pre-Mycenaean way of life of the Middle Helladic Age. (We can add the observation that this way of life has prevailed in Greece from the Neolithic Age into the 21st century CE.)

Over time, new subjects enter the picture of Iron Age Greece. In presenting the case for surprising energy in this early "Dark" age, S. argues against the view of its deep darkness that found wide support well into the 1960s. Particularly important are the activities of the "great discovery of early Greek archaeology since WWII"—namely the Euboeans, who early in the 11th century were engaging in "paracolonial" efforts in the northern Aegean and the Levant, and two centuries later in the central Mediterranean. This energy is linked with another major topic of early Greek history on which S. has led the way: the origin of the polis not only on the mainland, but as "exported" through colonial activity. Archaeological data allows the polis to be seen as more than a theoretical abstraction, by revealing a way of life within its physical context. Developments in the discipline of archaeology have added to the new perspective. While excavation defined the polis-center, survey archaeology is now identifying life in the *chora*.

S.'s presentation also serves as a model to other scholars. The base of his own knowledge is obvious: full employment of archaeological data, much of it from his own fieldwork, is the foundation for his arguments, while knowledge of the scholarship of others adds both depth and variety. His use of this scholarship is invariably respectful even when he disagrees with certain conclusions. S. embodies his own

plea for multi- and inter-disciplinary cooperation: his use of the tools of historians and classicists as well as archaeologists is exemplary.

S.'s style is always clear; his discussion of survey archaeology, for instance, could well be a manual for participants. He engages the reader's attention by going beyond description and data to raise questions, drawing his audience into the process. "Why" he asks (p. 238), "is it that modern scholarship has come to reject the implication that the political system of Classical Greece essentially goes back to the Heroic Age?" And common sense often suggests answers, as in the case of the view that early paintings on black-figure pottery are dependent upon Homeric epics. After demonstrating the limited number of indisputable parallels, S. suggests a source in parents' story-telling to their children (p. 369) and a generally heroic ambiance (p. 376). The book is handsomely produced with numerous illustrations. Would that its binding were as secure as its intellectual contents.

This brief summary of this book's coverage and style cannot do justice to a scholar who by his research, publications and instruction of a cadre of younger scholars has changed the direction of study of early Greece. In 1983 S. wrote that "the potential for archaeological evidence may offer grounds of optimism" (p. 27). His own efforts have brought this to pass.

CAROL G. THOMAS

University of Washington