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Review Article

Schliemann's lasting legacy

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Robert Laffineur & Massimo Perna (ed.). 2024. *Walking in the footsteps of the pioneer of Aegean archaeology: in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Heinrich Schliemann. Proceedings of the 19th International Aegean Conference (Aegeaum 49)*. Leuven & Liège: Peeters; 978-90-429-5320-8 €125.

The famous Heinrich Schliemann was born in 1822 and 200 years later, in memory of the birthday of the 'Father of Aegean archaeology', the 19th International Aegean Conference took place in Sardinia under the title 'Walking in the footsteps of the pioneer of Aegean archaeology'. But does the controversial figure of Heinrich Schliemann still play a role in twenty-first-century archaeology? What is new about this early archaeologist, who is discussed already in a vast amount of literature? And what quest(ion)s that Schliemann found unsolvable can we answer today, after 150 years of developing our methods? Thirty-two international scholars address these topics in 22 chapters that are grouped geographically and chronologically after Schliemann's explorations: A: Sardinia, B: Therasia, C: Troy, D: Mycenae, E: Orchomenos and F: Tiryns.

The keynote lecture from the conference by Thomas Palaima and Vassilis Petrakis composes the Introduction, in which not only Schliemann's Homeric questions but also the present-day significance of Homer for archaeological work in the Mediterranean region are discussed. First, Schliemann's path to Homeric archaeology is traced and contrasted with the development of contemporary philology and ancient topography. Then, finds, structures and written sources that are used as evidence of Homer's authenticity are scrutinised and the flaws in the respective arguments are made visible. Despite all these literary ambiguities, one thing remains certain: the Homeric epics will continue to accompany us not because of their answers to archaeological questions, but because of their epic stories and incomparable drama.

Section 'A: Sardinia (1864 and 1886)' consists of one chapter 'Schliemann and Sardinia' by Raimondo Zucca and deals with Schliemann's interactions with Sardinia, especially the museum in Cagliari, during two visits (1864 and 1886) and is based on the surviving correspondence. It also traces the history of research into the question of a 'Mycenaean Sardinia'. This is followed by section 'B: Therasia (1870)', which also consists of one contribution. Dimitra Douskos and Iris Tzachili highlight 'Heinrich Schliemann's epistemic premonitions at Therasia and beyond. Therasia is examined as a long-term chronological reference point for Schliemann. The site, which represents a clear contrast to Troy/Hissarlik due to its lack of written sources, is considered the first planned excavation of a prehistoric site in the Aegean because of the excavation in 1866.

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The next section, 'C: Troy (1870; 1871–1873; 1878–1879)' is, as expected, more extensive than the previous ones and contains four contributions. The first is by Vita Gerritsen, Gert Jan van Wijngaarden and Rüstem Aslan and introduces the 'Amsterdam Troy Project'. Anyone who has ever been involved in an archaeological excavation resents the visitor that looks at the rubble/spoil heap seemingly at random and makes a find that the excavators have obviously missed and now no longer has any context. Despite this aversion, we must examine closely which finds are actually noticed, collected and published in terms of our excavation technique, but also to understand how interpretations are made in publications. Although Schliemann never had full control over the selection of the finds retrieved, due to the enormous number of excavation workers (cf. 'Workmen's treasure'), the authors surprisingly attest to his greater care with regards to the ceramics than the subsequent campaigns by Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1893–1894) and Carl Blegen (1932–1938). This is attributed to his early interest in ceramic finds and the premiums he paid for such finds. In addition to this example, there is another surprise: in the area known as 'the Bump', contrary to all expectations, mud brick walls were found *in situ*. This shows that even after so many years, a revision of supposed facts from the old excavations is possible.

Who would have thought that Schliemann was a pioneer of interdisciplinary co-operation between archaeology and the natural sciences? Tobias Mühlenbruch deals with this exciting topic in the next chapter. He not only introduces the international experts appointed by Schliemann and their results but also sheds light on how these early beginnings led and continue to lead to scientific research becoming a matter of course and to a wide range of results for subsequent research at sites from Schliemann's professional biography. While the last two chapters show Schliemann's work in quite a positive light, Aslan, nowadays excavator of Troy, devotes the next chapter to a dark side of his predecessor. It deals with the Priam's treasure court case and Schliemann's relationship with the then director of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul, Philipp Anton Dethier. The question 'friend or foe?' refers not only to the complex relationship between Schliemann and Dethier, but also to Dethier's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. In the following chapter, Magda Pieniążek and Peter Pavúk examine the changing research perspectives for Troy and Western Anatolia. They highlight for how long research was guided by the Homeric narrative and in search of its historical sites. This may have been understandable for Schliemann's time, as research in Western Anatolia was just emerging, but can be considered downright backwards for the 1950s and 1960s. Fortunately, this shortcoming has long since been rectified, and today it is a well-researched region that still holds plenty of unanswered questions.

The next section 'D: Mycenae (1874–1876)' is the most extensive one and consists of 12 chapters. Dora Vassilikou begins with a reflection on the work of Panayotis Stamatakis, Schliemann's unwelcome supervisor in Mycenae. One would have wished for more than the existing 19 footnotes to be able to better assess the sources of the presented narratives. Vassiliki Pliatsika and Thanassis Sotirou's chapter introduces an eyewitness account of Schliemann's excavations in Mycenae. This report of the diplomat and writer Demetrius Caclamanos, who visited the excavations as a schoolchild, represents a completely new source. The authors convincingly classify his statements and make an important contribution to the history of research, and in particular to the whereabouts of some Mycenaean

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finds in Charvati. The next chapter looks at the grandest tholos tomb of the Mycenaean period: the famous 'Treasury of Atreus'. Constantinos Paschalidis not only traces the (research) history of this impressive structure, but also follows the paths of its preserved components, which combine to form an impressive façade shown on plate XLVII. Kim Shelton's chapter is the first in a group dealing with the settlement remains outside the citadel of Mycenae. She describes the latest results concerning structures and finds at Petsas House on the Pezoulia Slope and places them in the context of the work and legacy of the earlier excavators of Mycenae. Appropriately, this is followed by a contribution by Lynne Kvapil and Kim Shelton, which reviews 'Schliemann's 'lower city' and 'the view from Petsas house'. Here, the assumption that Schliemann believed that the 'lower city' was inhabited by 'lower people' is examined. A comparison of the English and German versions of Schliemann's Mycenae book provides clarity: Schliemann writes 'untere Stadt' (lower-situated city) or 'Vorstadt' (suburb) in German, not 'Unterstadt' (lower town), and further points out that, although it was less fortified, it contained very beautiful and large buildings (Schliemann 1878: 44). Therefore, the notion of a social ranking of the inhabitants of Mycenae by Schliemann can be refuted. Following that is a description of the significance of Petsas House as a ceramic workshop and economic centre, the demise of which at the end of the fourteenth century BC still raises many questions. Iphiyenia Tournavitou's chapter is dedicated to the 'East House complex' of Mycenae. The structures found here help shed important light on the postpalatial era and thus illuminate the still dark period following the destructions at the end of the thirteenth century BC. The next chapter takes a leap into earlier times: Lena Papazoglou-Manioudaki sets out in search of the Early Palatial Mycenae. In painstakingly detailed detective work, she compiles the scattered settlement finds from this phase for which, unfortunately, there is very little scientific documentation of the circumstances of their discovery. Maribelisa Gillespie and Kim Shelton follow "in the footsteps of the goddess" in their chapter on the production of terracotta figurines at Petsas House. In contrast to Schliemann, their interest in the idols goes beyond the representation itself and deals with socioeconomic issues, work organisation and lifespans of different idol types in LHIIIA2 (*c.* 1390–1315 BC). Eleni Konstantinidi-Syvridi, Nikolas Papadimitriou and Akis Goumas focus in their chapter on the gold *kylikes* from the Mycenaean Acropolis. This includes not only typological considerations but also material analyses and experimental reconstructions of these metal vessels. The following chapter by Gypsy Price, Jacqueline Meier and Kim Shelton presents the results of the archaeozoological investigations of the material from Petsas House. Their initial suggestion that Schliemann had no interest in 'ecofacts' contradicts what Mühlenbruch presents in this volume. The archaeozoological study mainly treats the Bovidae and concludes that only about 10% of the animal bones from Petsas House are cattle and most of them seem to have lived nearby. Hopefully, future research on material from other structures within the settlement will expand the database, allowing for more far-reaching results on subsistence and human-animal interactions. The chapter by Maria Emanuela Alberti contextualises the textile production as present in Linear B sources with the archaeological finds and it thus reconstructs places of production, storage, distribution and use of textile tools. When Schliemann found a golden cup with bird figures on the handles (in Grave IV of Grave Circle A in Mycenae in 1876), he was reminded of the description of Nestor's cup in the Iliad. Diana Wardle focuses on this

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prominent find and presents not only the techniques of the Mycenaean goldsmiths, but also the modern replicas that became popular worldwide after Schliemann's excavations.

The next section, 'E: Orchomenos (1880)' is represented by Kalliope Sarri's chapter on 'Schliemann's legacy at Orchomenos'. Although Schliemann discovered here ceramic finds similar to those of Troy and Mycenae, which could have been the key to horizontal stratigraphy in these early years, his investigations at Orchomenos were limited to 1880 due to the non-renewal of permits. Since then, the site has not attracted as much research attention as Mycenae, Tiryns and Troy. Therefore, this overview of all previous investigations and the current state of research is all the more important.

The last section 'F: Tiryns (1884–1885)' includes two chapters. In the first contribution, entitled 'What Schliemann could not have known', Joseph Maran provides an impressive overview of the Mycenaean postpalatial period and its significance as a link between the palace period and the crystallisation of the Homeric poems. He emphasises that Schliemann could not have known the timespan between the Mycenaean palaces and the Homeric epics, but it is all the more surprising that his successors, despite better research, maintained the dogma that Homer was a suitable historical source for Mycenaean Tiryns. The last contribution is by Ulrich Thaler and considers the term 'megaron' and the various buildings attributed to this group. Here, too, it becomes obvious which paths (some of which were the wrong paths) research has taken since Schliemann's time and how long it took to free itself from the Homeric narrative.

Unfortunately, the volume ends abruptly here, without providing a synthesis or compilation of the most important statements; the contributions stand alone, rarely refer to each other and each include a bibliography. Nevertheless, it is a great compilation, and Schliemann would certainly have been delighted to receive such a gift for his 200th birthday. Minor formatting and translation errors are easy to overlook, considering that the extensive volume was published just two years after the anniversary conference.

This volume demonstrates deftly that it is still rewarding to confront Schliemann and his work and shows as well how he continues to polarise opinions. Despite their professionalism, some authors cannot resist taking both large and small swipes at the pioneer of archaeology. Others, however, try to emphasise the positive aspects wherever possible. Ultimately, one does not have to decide if one would have liked Heinrich Schliemann; rather, one must comprehend him and his working methods as being of his time. During that time, particularly in the approximately 20 years of his archaeological activity, our discipline changed and evolved radically with, despite and because of Schliemann, and we would not be where we are today without his work.

Reference

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