

The number of books published in the general field of archaeology seems to increase every year. And every year it becomes more and more important to distinguish between real archaeology, the product of knowledge and experience, and the non-archaeology or pseudo-archaeology being written by those eager to cash in on the ever present fascination with space gods and the clue that unravels the mysteries of our ancient past. So far the best answer to all the nonsense about the 'Chariot of the Gods' school of archaeology is the small volume by Peter White, *The Past is Human*, Sydney, Australia, 1974, published by Angus and Robertson.

The high point in folly for 1976 came with the publication of *America B.C.* by Barry Fell (Quadrangle Books, 1976), a work that claims to present evidence for the presence of Celts, Phoenicians and Egyptians, a variety of groups that developed literate cultures in the New World millennia before the arrival of Columbus. America does have an ancient past says Fell, hence the title of the book, that can be studied through the surviving monuments and especially through the numerous inscriptions, in several ancient systems of writing including Micmac hieroglyphic, Iberian Punic and Ogam, that these early colonists carved on blocks of stone all through the eastern part of the United States.

Dr. Fell, a professor at Harvard University, is very serious about this and he has a dedicated following, complete with Newsletter. It would be a mistake just to dismiss all of this as another manifestation of the lunatic fringe that has always haunted the world of archaeology, translating the Phaistos Disc and uncovering the riddle of the Mysterious Etruscans. Dr. Fell deserves a serious answer. He is dead wrong, and his work—including his epigraphy—will not stand up to criticism, but it is up to those who know better to explain why such theories are totally unacceptable and to do so in a straightforward but detailed way.

In a different class altogether is I. Velikovsky's new book on *The Peoples of the Sea* (Doubleday, 1977). In a very seductive fashion Velikovsky lures the reader on into his own re-creation of the ancient world. Suddenly the Sea Peoples have become Persians and events of the early twelfth century B.C. have been moved into the fourth century B.C. The Egyptian texts and reliefs from the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu are now seen as records of battles between Greeks and Persians in the days just prior to Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire. Again the argument is quite unacceptable, as the Egyptian sources actually fit in with new texts from Hittite Anatolia and Ugarit and our general knowledge of the world at the end of the Late

Bronze Age (approximately 1200 B.C.), but it is presented with skill, verve, and a style utterly foreign to Barry Fell.

These books, and especially the one by Barry Fell as well as others much worse, all reflect a growing dissatisfaction by the reading public with the way archaeology is being practiced and published these days. All professional archaeologists should take heed and act accordingly. The giants of the past, such as Sir Arthur Evans, Sir Leonard Woolley and Sir Mortimer Wheeler, were never in danger of losing their audience. (In the American field, the same is true of such men as J. Eric S. Thompson and Gordon S. Willey. The importance of their work and a discussion of some recent books on American archaeology, both good and bad, will be the subject of a future editorial.) The reading public today is being turned off in droves by the aridity and over-specialization of much of the current archaeological literature. Who wants to read an excavation report that is really a record of the measurements of all the ancient bones found at the site?

The problem here is that popular writing in the field of archaeology is being left to journalists, who do not really understand the field or, worse, to those out to exploit a growing market for the irrational. Publishers are also to blame for the present sorry mess, for the feeling seems to be that it is legitimate to publish anything that will sell.

There are several different types of books being done very well these days, apart from the picture books that are of interest only for the quality of their color photography. One is what might be called archaeological biography, the life of a great archaeologist told in terms of his excavations and explorations, the contemporary reaction to his discoveries and their long-range significance. Two first-rate biographies have just been published. One is Jeannette Mirsky's *Sir Aurel Stein, Archaeological Explorer* (University of Chicago Press, 1977). Stein brought the importance of Central Asia to the attention of the western world. One of the greatest explorers of all time, he identified numerous sites along the ancient Silk Route between China and the West and brought back rich collections of artifacts for future study. Much of the archaeological work being done today in countries such as Iran and Afghanistan really amounts to the further investigation of sites first identified by Sir Aurel Stein. Jeannette Mirsky does credit to one of the great figures of twentieth century archaeology and her book is to be recommended to anyone who believes that interest and excitement can only come from Outer Space.

Another recent biography of note is that of Heinrich Schliemann, by Leo Deuel, an author well known for his earlier books, *The*

*Treasures of Time* (1961) and *Conquistadors With Swords* (1967). Called *Memoirs of Heinrich Schliemann* and published by Harper and Row (1977), this is the first good biography of the best candidate for the title, Father of Archaeology (the old biography by Emil Ludwig is without value and the recent one by Irving Stone, *The Greek Treasure*, I found boring and impossible to read). Actually it is hard to see how anyone could be dull when writing about Schliemann. Even the most prosaic account of Schliemann's exploits end up sounding like a historical romance. Nor is it possible to exaggerate the importance of Schliemann's work in determining the future course of archaeology. By his excavations at Troy, Mycenae, Tiryns and Orchomenos, Schliemann linked archaeology with Greek legend and myth. From then on every excavated site in Greece had to be identified with a site mentioned by Homer, just as every site in Palestine had to have a Biblical name. Only recently have scholars begun to question this fundamental assumption. Yet, though he was a scoundrel and an appalling field archaeologist (by modern standards), Schliemann was the first to recognize that the study of ancient Greek civilization could be something more than reading the ancient authors in a library. Schliemann finally managed to convince scholars of the value of the surviving remains in modern Greece and Turkey and, in that sense, can also be called the Father of Tourism.

It must be recognized that, in countries like Italy, Greece and Turkey, archaeology is becoming more and more a part of the tourist industry. Sites are excavated and maintained, even restored to some extent, so that they will be of interest to tourists and attract more visitors to the country. In many cases the local archaeological service now finds itself part of the Ministry of Tourism and attention is focused upon those sites judged to be of greatest touristic interest. The implications of this are obvious: American and European archaeologists operating in the Mediterranean and the Middle East are going to be allowed to excavate only at those sites the local government deems worthy of excavation, that decision being made on the basis of a site's anticipated interest to tourists.

One aspect of all this is the great attention now given to guide books and travel books. As the tourist is going abroad to see the sites, he needs to know something about what he is seeing. The result is a number of excellent publications some of them written by well known field archaeologists. The best guide to the major sites on the island of Crete is by Gerald Cadogan, *Palaces of Minoan Crete*, London (Barrie & Jenkins, 1976). Cadogan, the excavator of the Minoan Country House at Pyrgos, in southeastern

Crete, has worked at Knossos for many years and writes both from long association with the archaeological sites and from a real love for the island and its people.

Costis Davaras, the Greek archaeologist in charge of the eastern part of Crete, has written a general *Guide to Cretan Antiquities* (Noyes Press, 1976, Park Ridge, N.J.). Here the material is arranged alphabetically with entries for sites (Hagia Triada, Malia, etc., though the major palace sites are listed under 'palace of'), as well as for classes of objects, aspects of Cretan culture and general historical background (with general entries on things like 'Piracy' and 'Racial characteristics of the Minoans'). The balance is often uneven (the entry under 'Minoan Civilization' being about as long as that for 'Minos' Loves'), but the work does provide much of value. Unfortunately the book does not contain any publication bibliography even for excavated sites.

In this regard the Noyes Press has done much better with the two books, written by Robert Noyes himself together with Dorothy Leekley. The first, *Archaeological Excavations in the Greek Islands* (Noyes Press, 1975) does just what the title suggests. It provides very basic information on all excavated sites in the islands, including Crete. Attention is given not to the major sites (such as Delos or the Heraion on Samos) but to the minor excavations much harder to track down in the literature. The authors give publication bibliography and this is a most useful way to find out what has been uncovered on every island in the Aegean.

The same authors have now published *Archaeological Excavations in Southern Greece* (Noyes Press, 1976) with the same format. This deals with virtually all sites, both major and minor, in Attica and the Peloponnese, again with publication bibliography. For the serious tourist these books are highly recommended.

The Noyes Press also puts out an excellent series of straight-forward guide books, all being the American edition of books first published in England. Areas covered thus far include *Southern England* (by James Dyer), *Scotland* (by Euan W. MacKie), *Wales* (by Christopher Houlder), *Southern Italy* (by Margaret Guido), and *Central Italy* (by R. F. Paget). The general editor of the series is Glyn Daniel, well known as an author of books on archaeology and as the editor of *Antiquity*. There is even a book on *The Archaeology of London*, by Ralph Merrifield. The frequent visitor to London who reads this book will find out how much he has been missing (no one visits the Mithra temple, yet it is right down by the Tower of London) and what is known about the history of the city before the seventh century A.D.

—James D. Muhly