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978-0-521-89000-7 - Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments, and Memories

Susan E. Alcock

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ARCHAEOLOGIES OF THE GREEK PAST

Social memory – the shared remembrances of group experience – creates shared identity, and provides people with both an image of their past and a design for their future. But how are we to conceive the memories of past peoples such as, for example, the ancient Greeks? This book makes a strong case for the use of archaeology, particularly the evidence of landscape and of monuments, to trace patterns in commemoration and forgetfulness. Three detailed case studies (early Roman Greece, Hellenistic and Roman Crete, and Messenia in Archaic to Hellenistic times) focus on societies undergoing different types of social transformation. Material evidence allows us to observe how groups responded to these challenges, and how they made different uses of the past, in the past.

SUSAN E. ALCOCK is Professor of Classical Archaeology and Classics and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor at the University of Michigan and Adjunct Curator at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. She obtained her doctorate from the University of Cambridge and subsequently taught archaeology and classics at the University of Reading. She is the author of *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (1993) and editor of *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (1994, with R. G. Osborne), *The Early Roman Empire in the East* (1997), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (2001, with J. Cherry and J. Elsner), and *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (2001, with T. D'Altroy, K. Morrison, and C. Sinopoli). Professor Alcock was recently awarded a MacArthur Fellowship by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and has also been recognized with the Henry Russel award by the University of Michigan, as a Distinguished Faculty Member by the Michigan Association of Governing Boards, and with the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award by the Archaeological Institute of America. She is on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Archaeological Research*, *Journal of Social Archaeology*, and *Archaeological Dialogues* and the monograph series *Greek Culture in the Roman World*, *Topics in Contemporary Archaeology*, and *Cambridge World Archaeology*, all published by Cambridge University Press.

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For
MOUNT TOM
and
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PREFACE

Fittingly enough for a piece of writing about memory, this book stands as the end product of two acts of commemoration. In 1998 I was given the honor of delivering the Stanford Memorial Lectures, established by public subscription to honor the memory of William Bedell Stanford, at Trinity College, Dublin. There I first publicly explored the relationship of archaeology and social memory, focusing on case studies concerned with the Greeks under Roman rule and the Messenians under Spartan domination; chapters 1, 2, and 4 of the present volume are expanded and revised versions of those Dublin lectures. A year later, I gave the Seventh Ian Sanders Memorial Lecture in Classical Archaeology at the University of Sheffield. In honor of Sanders himself, a pioneer of historic Cretan studies, I turned to the commemorative landscapes of Hellenistic and Roman Crete; chapter 3 is a revised version of my lecture in Sheffield.

My curiosity about archaeology and memory, however, predated those two invitations. An obsession with memory has marked the closing decades of the twentieth century (in other words, my own adult life time); and near the turn of the millennium, when these lectures were delivered, the subject had become almost impossible to avoid, both within the academy and beyond. I remember first wondering about social memory and the Greeks when, while working with Peter Callaghan at Knossos on Crete in the 1980s, I heard about the discovery of Roman-period votives in the venerable – and, as I had conceived it, almost wholly prehistoric – Idaian Cave on Crete (discussed here in chapter 3). Research on regional developments in Roman Greece (considered a land “obsessed with its past”) and fieldwork in Messenia (an excellent example of a “people without history”) only prodded me further into wondering about what people in Greece, or indeed anywhere, remembered, and why, and how.

I met some people along the way who, directly or indirectly, fostered my ruminations about “the uses of the past in the past,” and who provided me

with the ammunition I have chosen to attack the subject. At the University of Cambridge, John F. Cherry and Anthony M. Snodgrass taught me about regional survey, and thus about landscape studies; here I have attempted to extend their convictions about the validity and power of survey evidence into the domain of commemorative behavior. At the University of Reading, my colleague Richard Bradley taught me to think about monuments and especially the “afterlife” of monuments, and demonstrated how to interpret them with panache. Combining the elements of landscape and monuments offers us not only an illuminating, but – I believe – an *indispensable* means by which to explore social memory in antiquity.

But make no mistake: this is not an easy endeavor. Memory’s “fragile power” (in Schacter’s phrase) resists easy conclusions or ready closure, however desirable these may often seem (Schacter 1996: 1–13). At an early stage of research I remember being heartened by the acknowledgments in Patrick Geary’s book, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*. There he quoted an anonymous reviewer’s opinion of his proposed project:

Historians from their earliest training are warned against arguments from silence, but Patrick Geary is proposing to study the sounds of medieval silences. But whatever the song affirms, silences remain silent. How can one study what people in the past forgot? . . . He wants to write on “structures of forgetting.” My counsel to him would be: forget it.

(Geary 1994: xiii–xiv)

But Geary persevered, and – for better or worse – so have I.

I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty and students of Trinity College, Dublin – especially Kathleen Coleman and Brian McGing – for their helpful comments on my Stanford Lectures and for their kind hospitality. Similar thanks must go to the Ian Sanders Memorial Lecture Committee and to my audience in Sheffield, with special acknowledgment to Paul Halstead, John Barrett, and John Moreland. Bettina Bergmann, Paul Cartledge, Kathleen Coleman, Jaś Elsner, Christopher Jones, Nino Luraghi, Robin Osborne, and Josephine Shaya have read all or parts of the book and offered much needed advice, as did an anonymous reviewer for Cambridge University Press. I must, as always, single out John F. Cherry for his unerring eye and unwavering grammatical sense. Some of the empirical data and theoretical approaches were also tried out on audiences at the American Anthropological Association and at the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Symposium, “Imperial Designs: Comparative Dynamics of Early

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Empires” (Alcock 2000; 2001b). Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the guidance of participants (particularly H el ene Lipstadt) in the workshop on “Monuments and Memory,” sponsored by the Ford Foundation and held at the Department of the Classics, Harvard University, as well as the participants of my graduate seminar, “The Archaeology of the Second Sophistic,” taught at Harvard during a term there as visiting professor in 2001.

Translations of Pausanias are taken from Frazer (1898a) with some modifications; the passage of Thucydides on p. 157 is from *Assassins of Memory* by Pierre Vidal-Naquet (  Columbia University Press. Reprinted with the permission of the publisher). Translations of other authors are as noted or my own. Robin Meador-Woodruff (Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan) and John Donaldson (Museum of Classical Archaeology, University of Cambridge) were instrumental in acquiring certain images; David L. Stone (Boston University) and Paul Jaronski (University of Michigan Photo Services) produced several of the illustrations. Work on this book was greatly assisted by my Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship at the University of Michigan.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	<i>Athens Annals of Archaeology</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
AR	<i>Archaeological Reports</i>
ArchDelt	<i>Archaiologikon Deltion</i>
ASAtene	<i>Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BSA	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
EntrHardt	<i>Entretiens Hardt</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
ICr	<i>Inscriptiones Creticae</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
PastPres	<i>Past and Present</i>
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>