

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *In Search of Agamemnon. Early Travellers to Mycenae*

In Search of Agamemnon. Early Travellers to Mycenae, by Dudley Moore, Edward Rowlands and Nectarios Karadimas, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 191 pages, £39.99, 2014, ISBN: 9781443856218

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I freely admit that I was a bit skeptical about whether yet another book about the history of Mycenae was going to add much more to our stock of knowledge about the place, but I am equally happy to admit that I was wrong. Like many I suppose I subconsciously realized that there was a Mycenae before Schliemann, but I was unaware of just how much interest there had been in the place over the many years between classical times and the high point of travel around Greece with the Grand Tour.

Moore, Rowlands and Karadimas clearly make the point that while Schliemann 'discovered' the Mycenaean world through his excavations, he most certainly did not discover Mycenae itself. They also clearly differentiate between the act of writing *about* Mycenae and its famous inhabitants (a popular past time among ancient playwrights, poets and historians), and the act of *visiting the place* and describing it in greater or lesser detail and with more or less accuracy.

In Search of Agamemnon is at once an introduction to the history of the place as we have come to understand

it since ancient times, and a history of the attempts by antiquaries, Grand Tourists, historians and, latterly, archaeologists to get to grips with the Mycenaean world and its legacy. In this the authors chart the development of approaches to dating the site, particularly in the 19th century. Along the way we are introduced to a host of characters – some famous such as Cyriacus of Ancona, Lord Elgin and the intrepid John Lloyd Stephens – and others less so. Indeed the bulk of the book is divided between chapters with a strong interpretive focus (especially Chapter One which discusses Mycenae in Classical times and Chapter Two where the Grand Tour is discussed) and those where excerpts from the writings of our 'searchers' from 1760 to 1877 dominate the text (Chapters Three to Six). Although quality inevitably varies, the majority both entertain and inform. Production values are generally pretty good, though a number of the illustrations have not been printed very clearly.

In Search of Agamemnon is an excellent addition to the literature about Mycenae. It is both thoughtful and knowledgeable and thereby enhances our understanding of antiquarianism in the long 19th century.

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Competing Interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

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