

CARL W. BLEGEN

PERSONAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

edited by Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan • Jack L. Davis • Vasiliki Florou

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Carl and Elizabeth Blegen

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Back cover image: The Blegen house on 9 Ploutarchou, now the seat of the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation. Photo Lambros Papanikolatos, J. F. Costopoulos Foundation.

Frontispiece: Carl W. Blegen, ca. 1930. Photo ASCSA Carl W. Blegen Papers, Blegen Library Archives. Elizabeth Pierce Blegen, ca. 1930. Photo ASCSA Elizabeth P. Blegen Papers, Blegen Library Archives.

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"On His Feet and Ready to Dig"

Carl William Blegen

Jack L. Davis and Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan

Carl William Blegen (1887–1971),[1] archaeologist and professor of Classics at the University of Cincinnati (1927–1957), is arguably, after Heinrich Schliemann, the most famous foreign archaeologist ever to work in Greece. Certainly, no American has had a greater impact on professional Greek archaeology, and Blegen was the first American to be recognized by the Archaeological Institute of America, when it inaugurated its Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement in 1965. Yet Blegen, unlike several contemporary scholars of Greek prehistory, such as Sir Arthur Evans, Duncan Mackenzie, and Richard Seager, until now has found no biographer, nor did he, as did Georg Karo, leave us an autobiography.[2]

The idea of publishing a volume about Blegen's life was inspired by discussions held a few years ago during a workshop dedicated to the philhellenism and philanthropy of American archaeologists who worked in Greece in the first half of the twentieth century.[3] Research on Blegen's papers at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) had shed light on two lesser known aspects of his life: his service in Macedonia in 1918–1919 with the American Red Cross and his involvement in the rehabilitation of Greece after WW II. Both activities had previously received only passing reference in the two sources that were most widely available for the study of Blegen's life: obituaries and brief memoirs composed by his colleagues. The fact that so much new information could be added to these scanty accounts was for us a sign of how little Blegen's life had been explored.

The editors of this volume never met Blegen, his wife Elizabeth Pierce Blegen, or their dear friends Bert Hodge Hill and Ida Thallon Hill—the "subject matter" of the papers in this collection. As students we, of course, learned of Blegen's accomplishments in the field of archaeology, but we knew nothing about the character of the man, let alone his personal life, or, for that matter, how he had evolved into such a dominant figure in Greek archaeology. Later in our own careers, we would hear, both in Athens and in Cincinnati, whispered rumors about the Blegens's and Hills's unusual private lives and residential arrangements. In more recent years, we also came to realize that the pool of those who had known the Blegens and the Hills was becoming

significantly smaller; for example, fewer than a dozen individuals remained of those who had worked with Blegen at Pylos, and they mostly in the 1960s after his retirement from the University of Cincinnati and after both Bert and Ida Hill had died.[4]

Contact between the American School and the director of the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, Hektor Verykios, and his staff, on the occasion of their production of an anniversary volume about the Foundation's thirty-year history, led rapidly to joint sponsorship of a colloquium in Athens in May of 2013 titled "Carl and Elizabeth Blegen Remembered, Ploutarchou 9 Celebrated." Today the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation is quartered in the elegant neoclassical house at 9 Ploutarchou Street in the Kolonaki district of central Athens, where the Blegens and the Hills resided for more than forty years.

We knew from our experiences in the archives in Athens and Cincinnati that there existed a treasure trove of resources just waiting to be mined. Fortunately, Blegen had a real sense of the significance of his own life, which he recorded in minute detail in personal diaries, excavation journals, letters to friends and family, and in memoirs.[5] The authors of this volume exhaustively researched these and other types of primary records in Greece, the United States, and England, and they then addressed questions that arose during that process, the ultimate goal being to compose narratives that represented aspects of Blegen's past. Each paper presented at the colloquium has been thoroughly rewritten. This volume now forms a coherent whole that may be read from cover to cover—we hope for the edification and enjoyment both of scholars and lay audiences.

"No Man Is an Island … Every Man Is a Piece of the Continent"[6]

It would be rash of us to insist that our book constitutes a "true" biography of Blegen, since it is not the enterprise of, nor does it embrace the perspective of, a single author. Nonetheless, the scholars whose work is published here did share from the start one common goal: to place fish in the stream, as Virginia Woolf referred to the duty of the biographer.[7] Today we call Woolf's approach "historical contextualizing." In setting out to examine a wide spectrum of Blegen's personal and professional life, the authors also undertook "the three-fold adventure of archival research, explanation, and representation," for "history is writing from one end to another."[8]

The ten narratives in this volume collectively encourage readers to change the scale at which they have been accustomed to view Blegen and his world. Paul Ricoeur observes that "[by] changing scale one does not see the same things as larger or smaller … one sees different things," a process that allows one to see relationships in new ways and to arrange them in new configurations.[9] What Ricoeur articulates in strict historical terminology, Virginia Woolf expressed eloquently, in discussing change in scale from a biographer's point of view: "All we have to do is to look and to listen and to listen and to look and soon the little figures—for they are rather under life size—

will begin to move and to speak, and as they move we shall arrange them in all sorts of patterns of which they were ignorant …; and as they speak we shall read into their sayings all kinds of meanings which never struck them … [because] once you are in a biography all is different."[10] Thus, from the microhistorical scale of family, personal and professional relations, religious beliefs, and economic realities, our contributors have also learned how Blegen negotiated with the social norms of his time, and what types of "adjustments" he made in order to "fit" into and to deal with situations of "discord, conflict, [and] disputes."[11] Such adjustments had, in fact, a lasting impact on the development of the educational institutions with which he was associated.

W. V. Harris, who recently edited a collective volume of essays about Cambridge ancient historian Moses Finley's lesser known American period, concluded that it is "a critic's foolish cliché nowadays to complain that volumes of conference proceedings do not cover their subjects comprehensively or consistently" when in them readers do "encounter novel information and suggestive arguments."[12] Indeed, it would be equally foolish to object that our volume does not constitute a "definitive" biography of Blegen. We follow Dame Hermione Lee, a biographer of Woolf, Willa Cather, and Edith Wharton, in asserting that there is no such animal as a definitive biography.[13] Since biographers all write "from a certain position, constructed by their history, nationality, race, gender, class, education and beliefs," biographies should be rewritten every other generation.[14] Woolf herself mused when trying to compose her own autobiography: "Consider what immense forces society brings to play upon each of us, how that society changes from decade to decade; and also from class to class; well, if we cannot analyse these invisible presences, we know very little of the subject of the memoir."[15] There is obviously a dose of postmodern indeterminacy in the historical contextualizing of the papers in our collection, and we admit that narratives are "partial and provisional, and … open to further interpretation."[16]

"Like the Miner's Canary" and Ten Narratives[17]

Carl Blegen is best known for his excavations at Troy in Turkey and at Pylos in Greece. At Troy, between 1932 and 1938, he resumed the excavations of Heinrich Schliemann and Wilhelm Dörpfeld, with the latter's blessings, and, in the course of only seven years, managed to place the site's ceramic chronology on a firm foundation for the first time. At Pylos in 1939, he discovered the so-called Palace of Nestor, which he then explored systematically from 1952 until 1969, uncovering not only a new Mycenaean royal center but also hundreds of Linear B tablets and unique frescoes. However, excavations constitute only a fragment of the rich tapestry that was Blegen's life, one embroidered with the threads of personal relationships interwoven with loyalty to institutions, commitment to family, patriotism, and devotion to his adopted homeland. Such matters take us deep into territory previously unexplored by students of the history of archaeology in Greece, and they

demand the broad social and academic context within which our ten authors have constructed their narratives.

The papers in this volume describe, in a loosely chronological arrangement, key stages in Blegen's personal and professional development. Born to Norwegian parents in 1887 in Minneapolis, he embraced life as an archaeologist and resident of Athens with all his heart and soul almost from the time of his first arrival in Greece, actions perhaps predictable only in hindsight. Drawing information from Blegen's personal correspondence and diaries, Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan contributes an essay about his early life, first in America, and then in Greece; she examines the world of ideas in which he grew up and that later shaped his behavior and provided motivations for his actions. Vogeikoff-Brogan treats Blegen like a hero in a *Bildungsroman*—a coming of age tale of a sensitive young man who searches for answers in life's experiences. The dramatic loss of his arm at the age of fifteen; the strict Lutheran environment in which he was raised; his decision to relocate across the Atlantic in 1911 and subsequently to extend his stay in Greece indefinitely, when most of his fellow students returned home after a year or two; his measured professional development, at least initially; and his full efflorescence as he approached the fourth decade of his life—these are all elements of a *Bildungsroman*.

Blegen seems to have suffered from a lack of direction during his time at Yale and in his early years at the American School. In Greece he divided his time between Corinth, where he learned to dig under the direction of Hill (director since 1906), and Athens, where, starting in 1912, he served as secretary of the School. An excavation at Korakou in the Corinthia in 1915 was the event that kick-started his unique professional development. While every American archaeologist in Greece was working at the Classical site of Corinth, Blegen began his own excavations at a prehistoric site. Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst, after painstakingly navigating Blegen's excavation notebooks from Korakou as well as his personal diaries from the period, discusses his development from "a neophyte student to a careful recorder of stratigraphy and the pottery found in various layers" to his eventual emergence as an Aegean prehistorian under the guidance of the slightly older and more experienced Alan J. B. Wace, director of the British School at Athens. Blegen in his doctoral thesis, a summary of the results of his excavations at Korakou, laconically noted the significance of his work: "The importance of the site of Korakou lies in the fact that, supplying the evidence that was lacking at Mycenae and Tiryns, it now definitely establishes the sequence of these prehistoric wares. On the southeastern Greek mainland, therefore, the prehistoric age—subsequent to the Neolithic—may now be recognized as falling into three great periods, with the object of giving them a name which will emphasize their essential mainland character, in contrast to the contemporary civilization of Crete and the Cyclades. It is proposed in this report to call these periods respectively Early, Middle, and Late Helladic."[18]

The venture at Korakou was followed by additional prehistoric investigations

in the 1920s, in the Corinthia, the Argolid, and in parts of the Peloponnese where prehistory was even more poorly understood, in areas such as Arcadia and Messenia. The intellectual collaboration between Blegen and Wace did not stop with Korakou. In the 1920s, both men, in the course of further field work in the Peloponnese, redefined major chronological problems in Aegean prehistory and challenged established ideas about the relationship between the Minoan and the Mycenaean civilizations, inevitably clashing with Arthur Evans. Yannis Fappas and Yannis Galanakis in two complementary essays explore the manifold dimensions of Blegen and Wace's professional and personal relationships through the medium of their correspondence.

By the 1920s it had also become obvious that Blegen intended to make Athens his permanent home. After completing and publishing his dissertation, as well as being promoted to assistant director of the American School, he married Elizabeth Denny Pierce in the summer of 1924, following a two-year courtship; later that year Hill, now not only his mentor but also his best friend, married Elizabeth's intimate friend, Ida Thallon. The "Quartet" of the Blegens and the Hills began life together on the premises of the American School, which they vacated in 1927, after Hill's forced resignation (in 1926) and Blegen's subsequent acting directorship (in 1926–1927).

Hill's departure from the American School still counts as the most dramatic episode in its history. The aftermath resounded for decades and still sparks questions in archaeological circles about the causes of the legendary rivalry between him and Edward Capps, Chair of the School's Managing Committee (1918–1939). Capps's new vision for the ASCSA and Hill's unwillingness to cooperate with him led to a final breach between the two men in 1926, with Hill losing the battle.[19] Thus, the Hills and the Blegens withdrew from the ASCSA and, after briefly renting a house on Rigillis Street in Kolonaki, established in 1929 an independent salon at 9 Ploutarchou, within walking distance of the American School.

The house on Ploutarchou would become a symbol for generations of Americans who studied both ancient and modern Greece. Yet the "Quartet" did not limit their social life to the small American community in Athens. Vasiliki Florou's narrative focuses on the "Quartet's" household and investigates the extended social milieu of the Blegens and Hills, as they embraced the elite of Athens and closely followed upper-class fashions. The so-called Greek Room in their house, adorned with traditional embroideries and furnishings from the island of Skyros, was very much in line with the style of other Athenian elite houses. In the 1930s, an enlightened generation in Greece, the famous "Generation of the Thirties," was searching for and discovering indigenous aspects of Hellenism in such modes of expression.

In addition to Hill's termination, another topic that has provoked considerable curiosity among archaeologists concerns the nature of the intimacy among members of the "Quartet." Robert Pounder's essay delves into the personal relationships between the two—in fact three—couples that occupied 9 Ploutarchou, and offers us a sensitive analysis of the emotional undercurrents that led to this uncommon, but

entirely successful, living arrangement. Katie Roiphe could, in fact, have added the Blegens and the Hills to her book, *Uncommon Arrangements*, alongside her discussion of a series of unusual marriages between the members of the British intellectual elite; these include H. G. and Jane Wells, Vanessa and Clive Bell, Ottoline and Philip Morrell, and especially Vera Brittain and George E. G. Catlin.[20]

Brittain's intimacy with writer Winifred Holtby persisted throughout her marriage to George Catlin and is remarkably similar to the situation in which Elizabeth Blegen and Ida Hill found themselves. Such relationships between women were not unusual in the early years of the twentieth century. Brittain and Holtby had been inseparable at Oxford prior to Vera's marriage, and she would later write to Holtby: "I still have the persistent feeling that my beloved husband is a mere accessory and that you, not him, belong to the real essentials of life."[21] Although their correspondence was charged with an ardor typically reserved for lovers, as was the correspondence between Ida and Elizabeth, there is no evidence that Brittain and Holtby's bonds were ever physical. And we suspect that Ida and Elizabeth, like other women of their generation who enjoyed similar affairs of the heart, would not have identified with the lesbian heroine of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, published in 1929.[22]

By 1927 Capps's rise to power and Hill's demise had already restricted the pursuit of Blegen's archaeological ambitions. The stage was now set for a series of events that would alter forever the course of Blegen's career and the field of Aegean prehistory. His professional life and the ambitions of the city of Cincinnati would now become one, as the latter hitched its star to his wagon.

A relationship between Cincinnati and the American School had already begun in 1921. William Tunstall Semple, a true visionary, had been hired into the University of Cincinnati's Department of Greek in 1910–1911. In 1917, he had married the wealthy heiress, Louise Taft, and then, in 1920, he had become head of the newly formed Department of Classics. With the help of Louise and her personal fortune, Semple embarked upon a lifelong mission to create an academic department that could unify all aspects of ancient studies: philology, history, and archaeology.

Semple's initial acquaintance with Capps in the early 1920s led to an arrangement with the American School whereby Hill and Blegen would dig on behalf of the University of Cincinnati in the Sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea, one of the pan-Hellenic sanctuaries of antiquity. Interest in this project extended well beyond the university and caught the imagination of prominent local businessmen. Thus, the excavations of 1924 were heralded in the *Cincinnati Times-Star*, a newspaper owned by the Taft family, with the headline "Distinction Seen for the Queen City." It did not take Semple long to realize that Blegen was the archaeologist he sought in order to round out his team in Cincinnati. Therefore, in March of 1927, in the bitter aftermath of Hill's departure from the American School, Blegen received a formal offer from Semple: "The interest in Classical archaeology has so increased during the past four or five years in Cincinnati that the standard of excellence to be expected in the presentation

of Archaeology in the University has risen greatly. Our supporters now demand a full time man and this man they wish to be the foremost representative of this branch of learning among American scholars."[23]

The offer was a full professorship, but it was by no means easy for Semple to seal the deal. At forty years of age, Blegen was already a superstar and was prepared to bargain hard to get what he wanted. In his reply to Semple, he asserted that completion of the program of research in which he was already involved would "necessitate my presence in Greece at least during half of each year to study the material on the spot and to conduct further exploration and excavation of the many sites which are still awaiting examination. This is the determining consideration which is governing my decision as to the acceptance or not of a new position upon leaving the School at the end of the present term."[24]

To Blegen's demands, the dean of the Graduate College responded: "It is wholly without precedent here to make a permanent arrangement with a professor that under no circumstances will he be expected to devote more than one-half his time to residence at the University, and I am sure that the Board would be loath to set such a precedent by making such an agreement in advance … This really means that you would never be required to spend more than a third of the year in Cincinnati: that there would be no inducement for you and Mrs. Blegen to establish a permanent residence here and to become a part of the University life."[25]

However, it came to pass that Blegen was able to strike a deal without precedent in Cincinnati. He would teach only in the autumn term; as a result, neither he nor Mrs. Blegen ever settled permanently in the United States. Contrary to the dean's expectations, Blegen did become a force in the university as well as in the community. At the former, he trained graduate students who, in turn, became leaders in the field of prehistory. He helped build the library of the Classics department and its modern Greek collection into one of the finest collections in the world. Outside the university he was a respected figure, in part because of his friendship with the Semples and with socialites Marion and Dorothy Rawson. Both sisters were trusted archaeological assistants, and Marion ultimately became his co-author for the publication of the results of excavations at the Palace at Pylos. Blegen also joined the one hundred elite members of the Literary Club of Cincinnati, a venue at which he presented memoirs from time to time.[26]

After his academic appointment, Blegen had the resources he needed to nourish his professional and personal life, with critical support networks on both sides of the Atlantic. From 1927 onward, his research would be fully funded by the Semples. He would live as a member of the "Quartet" at 9 Ploutarchou for at least half of each year, and he would visit his family in Minneapolis each Christmas before returning to Greece early in the new year.

The next four chapters in this volume introduce us to the mature period in Blegen's professional life. Elizabeth French's paper serves as a bridge to this period from

his time at the American School. French, the daughter of Alan Wace, is the only one of our contributors who personally knew all the players, the two Blegens and the two Hills. Her paper maps out the development in the 1930s of the friendship between her father and Blegen, the "Govs" as they called themselves. Both men were by then well-advanced in their professional careers and, as she puts it, "had become establishment figures" with handsome houses. Despite various professional and academic commitments that threatened to pull them apart and keep them away them from Greece, such as the excavations at Troy, Wace and Blegen continued to discuss Minoan/Mycenaean chronology in their letters, and were always prepared to challenge Arthur Evans's ideas about Cretan dominance over the Greek mainland. The year 1939 found each man with a new project: Blegen at Pylos and Wace again at Mycenae. But soon after they celebrated Wace's sixtieth birthday in the Treasury of Atreus, the Italian invasion of Greece forced both men to abandon their dream projects for more than a decade.

It is in that context that Jack Davis's essay explores for the first time the preamble to the excavations at Pylos, asking one significant question: "What took so long?" He is not referring to the continuation of the Pylos excavations in 1952, but to Blegen's campaign in 1939, which is usually presented as a happy afterthought that followed in the wake of the successful Troy excavations. However, Davis presents archival evidence that Blegen was already aware of the potential significance of Pylos in the 1920s, and was prevented by Capps from digging there. He had, in fact, quickly replaced Hill as Capps's principal enemy in Athens, and that antipathy would force him to look to Turkey for an excavation site. With Capps at the helm of the American School, there was no room for Blegen in Greece.

Had Pylos begun earlier, Blegen might never have gone to Troy. Brian Rose's chapter describes Blegen's work at Troy not only in relation to earlier discoveries by Schliemann and Dörpfeld, but also in the context of German-American collaborative excavations in the 1990s. He evaluates Blegen's archaeological accomplishments and sets them in their wider historical perspective. An emphasis on the meticulous recording of stratigraphy was already a feature of excavations at Korakou, but at Troy, with the full resources of the Semples behind him, Blegen was able to launch a monumental program of research that was both interdisciplinary and collaborative, and with few parallels in the eastern Mediterranean of the 1930s.

But Blegen was never only about archaeology. In his younger days, he traveled to Macedonia as a member of the American Red Cross (1918–1919) and he assisted refugees in the months following the destruction of Smyrna; he also responded to the call of public service during WW II. Until recently, one knew almost nothing about this aspect of his life other than the fact that he had served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor to the CIA. We now know much more.

Susan Heuck Allen, on the basis of her research in the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, has described the kind of work

that Blegen and other American archaeologists did in Washington, D.C., while Despina Lalaki and Niki Sakka have explored Blegen's involvement in Greece's rehabilitation efforts immediately after the war, in conjunction with our earlier workshop on philhellenism.[27] In this volume, Vogeikoff-Brogan in her paper also discusses this evidence, including Blegen's activities in 1945–1946 when he was cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Athens, as well as in 1948–1949 when he directed the ASCSA. These years mark the end of a forty-year period in her *Bildungsroman*. Capps had retired and no longer was an impediment, and after a constant process of *de-alignment* and *re-alignment*, Blegen, now internationally esteemed, both academically and professionally, was at last free to pursue his earlier dream of excavating at Pylos. He would also publish his discoveries with the assistance of Marion Rawson—thus escaping the curse of so many archaeologists while spreading the fame of the Cincinnati program more widely. The chapter in our volume by Nektarios Karadimas, makes clear just how great the impact of the discoveries at Pylos was. His study explores for the first time how both the Greek and foreign press perceived Blegen's excavations, and how Blegen managed to communicate his archaeological theories to a lay audience through interviews with the press.[28]

In the end, it will be up to our readers to decide the significance of Blegen's contributions to Greece, to archaeology in general, to Greek archaeology, and to American archaeology in Greece. We ourselves believe that in each area his accomplishments were substantial, and we here append a few remarks regarding his impact on American archaeology in Greece. Although Blegen never diverted the focus of the ASCSA from the Classical period (an orientation that would become even more pronounced after the start of excavations in the Athenian Agora in 1930), he did succeed in legitimizing prehistoric exploration as an important component of the American program of research, and significant excavations by his students and protégés (e.g., John L. Caskey at Lerna and William A. McDonald at Nichoria) were his legacy. Blegen pioneered innovations that would later become standard practices in archaeology, and he was one of the first archaeologists to recognize the value of a regional approach. His sponsorship of McDonald encouraged the creation of the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, while his openness to collaboration with both Greek (e.g., Konstantinos Kourouniotis, Spyridon Marinatos, George Mylonas, Dimitris Theocharis, and George Papathanassopoulos) and foreign archaeologists established precedents that presaged the sorts of collaborative research that are more common today. Finally, the thoroughness of his publications provided models that many aspired to imitate, but that few succeeded in doing. All of the preceding factors had an indelible effect on the way we today practice archaeology in Greece, a field of study that is far better for Blegen having contributed to it.

In conclusion, we must recognize those who contributed to making this volume (and the conference that preceded it) a success. First and foremost we appreciate the unwavering support of the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation and its director,

Hektor Verykios, and the encouragement of the chairman of Alpha Bank, Yannis S. Costopoulos, who took a personal interest in our research. We also owe a great debt to the staff of the Archives of the American School, to Carol Hershenson of the Department of Classics at the University of Cincinnati, and to Jacquie Riley and Mike Braunlin of the Burnam Classical Library at the University of Cincinnati, and to Melissa Eaby, Stefanie Kennell, and Alice Crowe, for editorial assistance. We gratefully acknowledge the support of James C. Wright, current director of the ASCSA, who enthusiastically included our workshop in the lecture program of the American School for 2012–2013. We thank Billie Jean Collins and her staff at Lockwood Press for providing such a welcome home for the fruits of our labor, and Ian Stevens for introducing us to her. And, finally, we thank the many individuals who took the time to inform us about their experiences with the Blegens and the Hills, especially Judith Binder, Bob Blegen, Nancy Bookides, John Camp, Miriam Caskey, Pam Clarke, Bill Donovan, David French, George Papathanassopoulos, John Pedley, K. D. Vitelli, and Charles K. Williams. They helped us get to know the "Quartet" at 9 Ploutarchou in ways not otherwise possible.

Appendix: The Human Side of Carl William Blegen's Archaeology

In his obituary for Carl Blegen, Jack Caskey, his successor as professor of Aegean Prehistory at the University of Cincinnati (from 1960) and as director of the American School (1949–1959), cited a passage from Blegen's 1965 acceptance speech, delivered on receiving the Archaeological Institute of America's Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement:[29] "Field archaeology—i.e., excavating—is an uncertain and fickle mistress. In addition to work, application, and perseverance, many other factors are essential for success: among the most important may be counted good luck and good comrades. Most of my failures resulted from the lack of one or both of these two elements; and most of my enterprises that somehow turned out reasonably well owed it to my able colleagues."

Caskey responded on behalf of Blegen's colleagues in Cincinnati: "Those of you who knew him can imagine the disarming and convincing tones in which the words were spoken, but may be left, like his colleagues, racking your brains to identify the failures to which he refers. Their existence is a well-kept secret."

Did false modesty lie behind Blegen's assertion that his successes were dependent on "good luck and good colleagues"? We, as field archaeologists ourselves, think we understand what he meant, particularly after having edited this volume. Blegen was an organizer by nature and had long been so. His brother Ted reminisced that "somehow Carl was frequently the manager of any undertaking not directed by father or mother. He had a way of turning any task given him into a game, like Tom Sawyer."[30] It is hardly a surprise to find that later in his professional life he also had a knack for finding good colleagues, converting them into fast friends, and then working with them

to accomplish monumental things. Archaeology for Blegen appears by definition to have been a team enterprise. Hill and Wace were his mentors during his formative years, and later life-long comrades. Piet de Jong, with whom he first collaborated in the 1920s at Prosymna, remained a member of Blegen's group at Pylos in the 1950s and 1960s. Marion Rawson, who also was present at Prosymna, followed him to Troy and then to Pylos, and ultimately, together with William Donovan, guided *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos* III through press after his death. And his graduate students, Caskey, Cedric Boulter, and Jerome Sperling all contributed to the monumental series of Troy excavation reports. If it is today fashionable to speak of a lack of publication as "archaeology's dirty little secret," Blegen is one archaeologist who could never be found guilty of this crime.[31] At his death he left little unpublished, and he made arrangements for the remaining odds and ends to be handled by others after his death.

The occasion of our conference in Athens in 2013 provided us with an excellent excuse to indulge our curiosity about Blegen by examining in a more personal way his relations with his colleagues. We invited George Papathanassopoulos, who had worked with him at Pylos in the 1950s to deliver a final address, and we also canvassed other friends and colleagues for their own stories about Blegen. Several sent us tales, which we excerpt here in the hope that they will give readers a clearer impression of the character of Blegen the man.

In 1968, John Camp, the director of the ASCSA's excavations in the Athenian Agora, was one of the very last students to assist Blegen at Pylos. He wrote in his diary: "His [Blegen's] was the company of great names of those gone and of them all, only he was still alive, one of the best-known and respected archaeologists in Greece. A quiet intelligent man of infinite experience, calmly stating what he believed to be the truth … An old man but one the world had never been able to afford to ignore or pass by, a great man whose name would never be forgotten."

Karen Vitelli had come to Pylos as a student a few years earlier, in 1965, to help with the installation of the Museum of Chora, under the supervision of Nikolaos Yalouris, the director of the Greek Archaeological Service in Olympia, under whose jurisdiction Pylos lay at the time.[32] In response to our request, she commented: "living and working near this legendary team [Blegen and Rawson] … we knew they were legendary, were very impressed to be able to be this close to them … My memory of Blegen is largely visual, of a very quiet, gentle man, very concerned about his wife, who was recovering from a stroke, pleased when we spent time speaking with her. He was a stickler for getting things right."

Of Mrs. Blegen, Pam Clarke (née Jones), who was also assisting Yalouris, added: "Mr. Blegen asked me to work with his wife who had had a stroke—I worked on speech with her many, many lunch periods … She was lovely and he was so tender with her. I think he asked me because of a Vassar connection … She wanted to regain speech and reading, so we spoke together and practiced sounds, then we read together, and then I read to her… Mr. Blegen was grateful and sweet."

John Pedley, now Emeritus Professor of Classical Archaeology and Greek at the University of Michigan, had excavated with Blegen in 1964 as a student at the American School: "I was struck straightaway by Blegen's modesty and warmth as well as by his knowledge. He was always genial and helpful. In the field he was precise in his instructions, made crystal clear what his expectations were, and his reading of the pottery was eye-opening. I shouldn't have been surprised, I suppose, given his experience and memory and eye but I had to learn in a hurry, and I did. After a while, he let me get on with it."

And David French, later the director of the British Institute at Ankara, shared his memories from 1958: "Happy memories of the dig but the scars of Blegen's reprimand are still on me! … No, he didn't share his experiences and/or memories nor reflect on the past. I suppose that I knew too little or rather not enough whereby to prompt him. Ten years of living and travelling in Turkey I did not then have. As for the future, I really wanted to ask him (and AJBW) what they would do to fill the evident lacunae in the "Great Bilge."[33] Didn't get round to it."

Camp, like French, commented on this harsher aspect of Blegen's personality: "Among those who didn't know him, Mr. Blegen was thought to be gentle; and he was. But among those who worked with him, he had a fuller reputation as a man who was somewhat hard to work for. Once he had stated an opinion, it was to be regarded as fact; one did not argue with Mr. Blegen, his word was law. Unlike [Oscar] Broneer, who would clear the air with a magnificent explosion every so often, Blegen smouldered. In short, his gentle manner was real, but it hid a forceful stubborn personality. All this I had been apprised of beforehand, in a briefing session with Bill Donovan, who had recommended me to Mr. Blegen for the work in the first place."

Notes

1. The title of this introduction is a quote from Blegen himself, taken from a draft of an unfinished essay that he wrote in the late 1960s and intended to mail in response to a request from the editor of the Yale Alumni Magazine; see R. D. Blegen 1995, p. xiv. The full text reads: "An active archaeologist has always to be on his feet and ready to dig, though it is not just digging at all; it is much more than that."

2. Evans 1943; Becker and Betancourt 1977; Momigliano 1999; Karo 1959. Since our own workshop, two others held in Athens have focused on the lives of prominent Aegean prehistorians, George Mylonas and Spyridon Marinatos; papers from both have recently been published (Petrakos 2013; Mantzourani and Marinatos 2014).

3. Davis and Vogeikoff-Brogan 2013.

4. This is also true in the United States, where few Blegen relatives who knew Carl remain alive. An important exception is his nephew, Robert (Bob) Blegen (son of Carl's brother John), who visited us in Athens as we were writing this introduction. Bob, the unofficial family historian, had traveled to Pylos in 1966 with his family, and, in the 1990s, privately published two volumes of Carl's letters to his family (R. D. Blegen 1994, 1995), as well short stories (R. D. Blegen 1997) most composed for the Literary Club of Cincinnati between 1942 and 1957. See also J. L. Davis, "Unbalanced Academics, Scribblers, and an 'Odd Christmas,'" *From the Archivists Notebook*, 1 September 2014, http://nataliavogeikoff.com/2014/09/01/unbalanced-academics-scribblers-and-an-odd-christmas/.