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James Higginbotham
Bowdoin College

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Richard Hodges,
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Butrint and the Global Heritage Industry.*

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Butrint, ancient Buthrotum, is one the most important archaeological sites in Albania and is fast becoming a popular stop for tourists and scholars alike. With the earliest remains dating back to the Bronze Age, the site was subsequently occupied by Greeks, Romans, Slavs, and Venetians before being abandoned in the 16th century. Butrint was first scientifically explored in 1928 by the Missione Archeologica Italiana under the direction of Luigi Maria Ugolini. These excavations set the tenor for contextualizing Butrint, not only in the setting of the ancient world but shaped by contemporary narratives that define an identity for the “place”. The Second World War intervened to close the Italian excavations and, after the creation of a communist state under Enver Hoxha, all foreign archaeological efforts were banned. Excavations continued under the directions of the Albanians until the collapse of the communist state in 1992. The subsequent democratic government solicited external support for the excavations of Butrint, and they found willing patrons in the Lords Rothschild and Sainsbury of Preston Candover who established the Butrint Foundation in 1993 to coordinate the study and preservation of the ancient town.

No one is better positioned to recount the archaeological history of Butrint than Richard Hodges. As scientific director of the excavations from 1993 until 2012, Hodges oversaw the study and preservation of the site on behalf of the Butrint Foundation. The author does not set out to introduce us to Butrint guided by monuments or chronological timeline but presents the site within its development as an archaeological “place”, or destination, to use the touristic parlance. His discussion of Butrint poses important questions and challenges for archaeologists: What heritage or history is served by archaeology? How do archaeologists contribute to the branding of a place? Who are the important stakeholders needed to sustain the effort to protect ancient sites?

Hodges is a clear and engaging writer whose personalized account make this book hard to put down. Divided into five chapters, *The Archaeology of Mediterranean Placemaking* begins in chapter 1 by defining a “place” in an archaeological setting and how “placemakers”, nation states, academics, and intuitions such as UN-

ESCO, provide a kind of authenticity to a site. For Butrint, having gained World Heritage status in 1992, the designation provided a globally recognized label that has encouraged increased support for the antiquities while putting pressure on local infrastructure to maintain the site.

In his second chapter, *In Virgil's Long Shadow*, Hodges explores the celebration of Butrint in Virgil's *Aeneid* (III 291-355) as "a little Troy" and how this association was manipulated by the Romans and, much later, by the Italian excavators who sought to "artfully shape Butrint as Virgil's Troy". Under communism, Albania's archaeologists and historians avoided the connections to Virgil as they were tied to fascist and western narrative. Not surprising, the inscription conferring World Heritage status on Butrint makes no mention of Virgil.

Chapter three, *New Identity? An Excavated Narrative*, reviews the history of excavation at Butrint and outlines the strategies being employed by the Butrint Foundation as they develop a new master narrative for the site. The description in this chapter comes close to serving as a guide to the site in general. An important addition to the new narrative for Butrint is the inclusion of the sites located in the surrounding territories now protected by the Butrint National Park.

The history of Butrint Foundation is the focus of the fourth chapter. The efforts and goals of the foundation are presented in four phases: 1) establishing working relationships between the various parties working at the site; 2) creation of the Butrint National Park; 3) developing the park's infrastructure; and 4) planning for a sustainable future. The last of these is a work in progress. Hodges is honest in his assessment of the challenges ahead as local communities wrestle with the park in their midst and wonder how they might benefit or profit from the resulting tourism. Preserving the ancient town in its natural setting presents an ongoing struggle as the coast of Albania is developed to meet the growing demands of residents and tourists.

This discussion segues smoothly into the last chapter, *Eternal Butrint? Reflections on Its Future Sustainability*. Here, Hodges conveys his concern about long-term preservation of Butrint in the face of mass tourism and its economic allure. The Butrint Foundation, together with Albanian authorities, have worked dilligently to keep pace with growing demand for access to the archaeological site. Between this reviewer's first visit to Butrint in 2004 and his last in 2013, the rapid development of the site has been stark. Signage around the site had been installed, the Museum was renovated, and amenities for visitors had been added including a hotel near the site and public toilets. All of this to accommodate nearly 150,000 visitors annually.

Though not strictly writing a guidebook, Hodges has produced an important and, at times, controversial introduction to the site of Butrint that grapples with

many of the critical issues that are faced by archaeologists today as they navigate the way archaeology helps to make a place.

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James Higginbotham
Bowdoin College