

PAVEL OLIVA, *The Birth of Greek Civilization*. Translated by Iris Urwin Levitová. Edmonton, Alberta: Pica Pica Press (Textbook Division of the University of Alberta Press), 1985. Pp. 200. Paperback. \$11.95.

Professor Pavel Oliva works in the Department of Ancient History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences where he is the Vice Chairman of the Society of Classical Philologists. He is also a lecturer at the Charles University in the Prague, a prolific author of books and articles, and a representative of his country to various international academic bodies. *The Birth of Greek Civilization* was originally published under the title *Zrození řecké civilizace* and appeared as an Orbis book in London in 1981. It is obviously intended for use as a textbook for the archaic period in Greek history.

The special feature of *The Birth of Greek Civilization* is its ability to cover a great deal of Greek history in a very few pages and to do so with authority and clarity. The author has kept abreast of the latest developments in classical archaeology and classical philology but has not lost sight of the uninitiated student for whom this book is intended. Two maps and sixteen pages of plates of illustrations are provided to illuminate the text, and the six page bibliography is more than adequate for beginning students and teachers. The book is organized around six compact chapters: «From Early Neolithic Times to the Height of the Bronze Age»; «The End of the Mycenaean Civilization and the 'Dark Ages'»; «Sparta and Dorian Crete»; «Greek Colonization and Social Change»; «Political and Social History of Athens»; and «Art, Literature and Thought in Archaic Greece». There is not much in this book that is new to the trained classicist or ancient historian or even less that is controversial. It is an eminently usable textbook for ancient history courses that want and need to deal with the Archaic period separately but, like many such books, it unashamedly prepares the student for the Fifth Century and is built on the assumption that ancient Greek history is well worth studying because «as it developed further Greek civilization proved its superiority and viability in the success it achieved in all spheres of human knowledge and activity, and became one of the most influential forces in the history of the ancient world» (p. 184).

Anyone teaching ancient Greek history would do well to consider inclusion of *The Birth of Greek Civilization* in their required reading list. They will not be disappointed.

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PAOLO VIVANTE, *Homer*. Hermes Books. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985. Pp. xiv + 218. Paperback. \$6.95.

There are certainly better books for the nonspecialist to read on Homer than Paolo Vivante's *Homer*. The General Editor of the Hermes Book Series, John Herington, in