

1. The Catalogue of Ships (Dow, Sterling, "The Greeks in the Bronze Age" <sup>1960</sup>)

p. 172 . . . whatever the consequences, the Catalogue must be pronounced completely and absolutely in error. Some details of cities and men were seemingly preserved correctly in the tradition, but the poets were not political historians; they needed cities for Diomedes, and recklessly they gave him the nearest. It is yet another instance of the whimsical, but perhaps intelligible, inaccuracy of epic poetry.

2. Trojan War (Sterling Dow)

p.172 Modern research may have shown that the Trojan Catalogue parades remarkable knowledge of Asia Minor (and a remarkable omission, the Hittites). Nevertheless, Troy being the size it is, in the real war they cannot have done anything. In the epic they are needed to balance the vast Greek Catalogue, and to provide cannon fodder for the Greeks.

p. 153 Under the eyes of the Cretans, Mykenai created a navy . . . Allied fleets were doubtless enlisted: if so, the coalition against Troy was not the first foreign expedition Mykenai had commanded.

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p. 170 The supposition that it was Mykenai which led the attack and got the lion's share of the results rests on the united testimony of archaeology and tradition. Archaeology shows that at Mykenai were the grandest structures in all Greece, and there too (though in this the chance of preservation plays a part) were found the richest graves. Tradition, embodied in the Iliad - including the Catalogue, which gives Mykenai 160 ships as against 90 (Pylos), 80 (Crete, also Tiryns), and 60 (Lakedaimon) for the next most powerful navies - is fully in accord. . . . Thus although it is conceivable that a different city led the conquest of Knossos from that which led the conquest of Troy, the indications point strongly to Mykenai, and the supposition will only be to be doubted if strong adverse evidence appears. At present there is none. . . . Mykenai led in the conquest of Troy.

3. The "Nine cities of Pylos" M. I. Finley, in Kirk's Lang & Bkgrnd, p.146-7

One group of tablets has been reasonably interpreted as revealing the names of nine localities in southwestern Peloponnesus which were somehow subordinate to Pylos . . . and at once some scholars pointed to Il. 2.591-96 and Od. 3.5-8, where the figure 'nine' is associated with Pylos. Except for Kyparisseis, however, the names of the places are quite different in the poems and the tablets, and the Odyssean account is incompatible in every way with the information in the tablets. The recurrence of the number 'nine' may well be no more than a coincidence, for that number plays a very special role in the poems . . . If, however, the Iliad and Odyssey had in fact retained a 'memory' of an actual power relationship in Messenia, that memory was almost totally wrong. Until the tablets were deciphered, there was no way to determine which bit of the poetic version was accurate; after the decipherment, there was no longer any need to turn to the poems. If the 'nine cities of Pylos' prove anything at all, therefore, it is the uselessness of the Homeric poems as a source of narrative history.