

p. 452 Our review of the material civilization depicted in the Homeric poems has led us to the conclusion that while features of Bronze Age culture are undoubtedly preserved in them, these are much less considerable than was at one time supposed. It was an inevitable result of Schliemann's excavations and their astounding success that the extent of the Bronze Age tradition was exaggerated, nor could there be any effective criticism until the relevant chronology had been explored. For this task the epoch-making excavation of Knossos afforded the material; and the revelation - . . . -that the Shaft-graves preceded the destruction of Troy VIIa by some three centuries, while half a millennium separated the Warrior vase and kindred productions from the body of evidence provided by Late Geometric vase-painting, brought home to students of the subject the need for a drastic revision of Reichel's conclusions. We have seen his almost ubiquitous body-shield reduced to two appearances and found that between the date of the Warrior vase in the second half of the thirteenth century and that of the battle-scenes depicted on Late Geometric vases the changes in arms and equipment were few and for the most part not such as would necessarily be recorded in verse. The chariot, the chiton, the round shield, and the slashing-sword were all there; after the close of the Bronze Age there is only one change of major importance, viz. the substitution at a date at present undetermined of a pair of throwing-spears for the single heavy thrusting-spear, and in Homeric warfare the pair of throwing-spears is normal.

Yet unmistakable traces of the Bronze Age tradition survive. Besides the allusions to the body-shield we have Nestor's cup, which finds a closer (though far from precise) analogue in the Dove cup from Shaft grave IV than in any later monument. The technique of metal inlay which produced the Shield of Achilles was practiced in Greece in the Late Bronze Age, disappeared before its close, and apparently never revived there. Some, though by no means all, of the subjects portrayed on the shield have behind them a tradition which goes back as far.

Boar's tusk helmet
 More conclusive evidence, however, than any of these afford is to be found in K, in the passage describing the boar's tusk helmet. This gives us by far the most certain and satisfactory account to be found in the poems of an object which demonstrably did not survive the Bronze Age. . . . For four centuries at least no one could possibly have seen a boar's tusk helmet; only in the amber of traditional poetry handed down with an astonishing verbal fidelity could its image have been preserved.

No less valuable as evidence is the consistency with which the fiction of bronze weapons is maintained throughout the poems.

p. 526 In both Iliad and Odyssey, passages which on archaeological or historical or quasi-historical evidence are generally regarded as late and therefore by Unitarians as interpolations can, with two exceptions presently to be mentioned, be dated with a high degree of probability, sometimes with virtual certainty, to the seventh century. This implies that the two poems were complete by 700 or not much later, and that for some time after, but not for very long, the text was transmitted in circumstances which made it highly vulnerable to interpolation. The only interpolations definitely datable to the sixth century (apart, of course, from small verbal alterations, the needless repetition of stock lines