

Wace and Stubbings

Polity and Society (ii) Historical Commentary - T.B.L. Webster (cont'd)

Homer preserves memories of Mycenaean palaces - (bottom p. 460)

Parallels between the Homeric religion and what must have been true of the Mycenaean religion as portrayed on Pylos and Knossos tablets is cited on p. 461.

+ The resemblances between Mycenaean religion (in so far as the tablets reveal it) and classical religion is far more striking than the differences. Here, . . . we can speak of survival, and there was no difference for Homer between past and present. In other respects the Mycenaean world . . . was part of the story and therefore survived in poetry, although it had long ceased to belong to present-day experience. Sometimes the scale was reduced to make the past credible; . . . Always the poets were aware of their contemporary world and introduced it where they could into the stories as well as into the similes. But the similes were the natural place for modern elements because the purpose of the similes was to illustrate the heroic past in terms of the known present.

Religion - by H. J. Rose

Putting all these indications together we may legitimately conclude that the Minoans, and it would seem also the pre-Hellenic inhabitants of Greece proper, practised a religion differing widely from that which we find depicted in the Homeric poems, yet influencing it and possessing features which long survived the culture or cultures in which they originated.

Thus we have evidence, scrappy but suggestive and highly interesting, of two pre-Homeric strata of religion: the Minoan, carried by a people not of Indo-European speech or antecedents, and the Mycenaean or Achaeae, belonging to the Greek-speaking invaders. Neither is identical with the Homeric picture, but both, especially the latter, have influenced it and the subsequent Greek cults alike