

PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY

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Problems in Greek history by J. P. Mahaffy

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BY

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PREFACE

EVEN since the following sheets were printed, the researches into prehistoric Greek life, and its relation both to the East, to the Homeric poems, and to the Greece we know in the 7th century B.C., have progressed, and we are beginning to see some light through the mist. I can refer the reader to two books, of which one has just been published in English. The other, the second edition of Busolt's *History of Greece*, though still in the press, will be accessible to those that read German in a few weeks. I prefer to cite the former—Schuchardt's account of *Schliemann's Excavations*—in its English form, as it is there enriched with an Introduction, and apparently a revision of the text, by Mr. Walter Leaf. This is the first systematic attempt to bring into a short compass, with the illustrations, and with some regard to chronology, the great body of facts discovered and hastily consigned to many large volumes by the gifted discoverer. There is, moreover, a separate chapter (vi.) which gathers these facts under a theory, not to speak of the acute and cautious criticism of Mr. Leaf, which will be found in the

Introduction to the volume. The Introduction to Busolt's *History*, of which (by the author's courtesy) I have seen some 130 pages, contains a complete critical discussion of the same evidence.

Here is the general result in Busolt's own exposition (*G. G.* 2nd ed. pp. 113 sq.): 'The Homeric culture is younger than the Mykenæan, it is also simpler and in better proportion. The former had come to use iron for arms and tools, the latter is strictly in the age of bronze¹. If the culture of the Epics does show a lower stage of technical development, we perceive also a decline of oriental influences. In many respects, in matters of interment, dress and armour, the epic age contrasts with the Mykenæan, but in many points we find transitions and threads which unite the two civilizations. The Homeric palace shows remarkable agreements with those of Mykenæ and Tiryns. The Homeric heroes fight with sword, spear, and bow, like the Mykenæan. Splendid vases, too, and furniture, such as occur

¹ 'In the whole range of the Mykenæan culture, there have only been found in the later graves of the lower city, and in the beehive tomb of Vaphio, remains of some finger-rings of iron, used for ornaments. Iron tools and weapons were unknown to the Mykenæans—in spite of Beloch's opinion to the contrary. In the *Iliad* bronze is mentioned 279 times, iron 23; in the *Odyssey* they are named 80 and 25 times respectively, but the use of the later metal was far more diffused than the conventional style of the Epos betrays. Iron weapons are indeed only mentioned in the *Iliad* IV, 123; VII, 141, 144; and XVIII, 34. Books IV and VII are undoubtedly of later origin. Still the use of iron for tools was known throughout the whole Homeric age, and was gradually increasing during the growth of the Epos.'

within the range of the Mykenæan culture, agree even in details with the descriptions of the Epos. The Epos, too, knows Mykenæ "rich in gold," and the "wealthy" Odeomenos. In general the homes of the Mykenæan culture are prominent in the Iliad. The splendour of the Mykenæan epoch was therefore still fresh in the memory of the Æolians and Ionians when the Epos arose.

'If the life thus pictured in the Epos thus shows many kindred features to that of Mykenæ, the Doric life of the Peloponnesus stands in harsh contrast. Not in strong fortresses, but in open camps, do we find the Dorian conquerors. The nobles do not fight on chariots in the van, but serried infantry decides the combat¹.

'It was about from 1550 to 1150, that Mykenæan culture prevailed, and was then replaced, as the legends asserted, by the Dorian invaders.'

Let us note that the earlier and ruder civilisation of Troy may be contrasted with that of Mycenæ, though both of them show successive stages—the later stage of the (second) city of Troy approaching to the intermediate stage of Tiryns, and indeed, forming an unbroken chain with this, Mycenæ, and even the later and more finished

¹ Probably, Busolt adds in the sequel, the use of iron weapons by the Dorian invaders may have been one cause of their victory. But it seems to me mainly to have been the victory of infantry over cavalry, and thus a very early type of the decisive day at Orchomenus, when the Spanish infantry of the Grand Catalan Company destroyed Guy de la Roche and his Frankish knights, and seized the country as their spoil.