

p. 160 The two "great houses" Homer spends most time in, that of Menelaos at Sparta and of Odysseus in Ithaka, have not been found yet; some which have been found have not yet been connected successfully to inherited legend, like the romantic island fortress of Gla in Lake Kopais

p. 172 ((re Interiors: Paint and Furniture))
For us the significant element is the art, the painting on the walls and floors, the rare remains of furniture. For them such things were doubtless admirable but often taken for granted - at least it is curious that Homer and his poetic sources never mention frescoes at all. If Greek epic tradition contains any genuine reminiscences of Mycenaean palaces, the poets must have been blind or uninterested. It tempts one to believe that epic only gathered its true strength after the fall of the palaces and discarded elements which had dropped out of real life

p. 275 Around 1300 B.C. . . . Troy VI H suffered from some catastrophe which effectively damaged her walls. Blocks from the superstructure were tossed to the ground and the great houses on the acropolis fell in ruins. The early excavators, Schliemann and Dörpfeld, interpreted this catastrophe as the Trojan War itself, especially since the Sixth City matched the poetic image of the splendors of Troy; this theory has been revived in several quarters lately, but whatever happened to Troy then happened too early for any sound chronology of the Trojan War. Professor Blegen and the Cincinnati expedition understood it rather as a severe earthquake, especially since they saw no traces of fire, and the ultimate Greek victory is always imagined by the epic poets in a setting of crackling flame.

p. 276 A new city was created out of damaged Troy VI H, a direct continuation of it though labeled Troy VII A. . . The volume of Mycenaean imports is reduced to a trickle, so that it is particularly difficult to relate the chronology of Troy VII A to mainland events, but the few distinctive pieces are from great destructions, from Pylos in the west to Ugarit in the east; they belong technically to the transitional ceramic period LH III B-C. This city comes to an end in flames, and in spite of its shoddy aspect is generally felt to be the city Homer sang about. Two doubtful skeletons and one arrow-head of a common Aegean type are all that survive as relics of the "great siege." Survivors clean up the city once more and live in it for a while, still importing a few Mycenaean vases of the same III B-C type. Eventually they accept among them a group of aliens whose prime archaeological creation was an ugly handmade pot with knobs on. In a little while the city is abandoned, after nearly two thousand years of habitation.

When one compares this real image of Troy with Homer's poetic image, the gap is great and disappointing, but one should never underestimate the healing powers of poetry.

p. 277 Many details in the epic account of the siege at Troy are of course older than the Trojan War itself, part of an antique and traditional siege poem about the sack of a walled town by the sea. The theme had been reflected in different terms in the world of Mycenaean art since the Silver Siege Rhyton of the Shaft Graves . . ; the siege scenes of Mycenae and Pylos were painted before the final episode at Troy . . .

If there is any truth at all in epic tradition, we must see that some of the details in Homer's account harmonize extremely well with the general international situation in the thirteenth century. . . Troy fell, according to the guesses of later Greek savants, anywhere between 1334 (Douris of Samos) and 1135 (Ephorus). Eratosthenes' calculation by generation put it at 1184 B.C., which has always seemed an intelligent compromise. The archaeological date for the burning of Troy VII A is unsettled at the moment because there was so little easily dateable Mycenaean pottery in that city. Professor Blegen has set it much earlier than other scholars, at 1240 or even 1270 B.C. . . .