

p. 82 For example, one scholar, Martin Nilsson, long ago made the simple assumption that the place names most often mentioned by Homer were the chief Greek centers in the Mycenaean period. He then analyzed the special religious cults surviving in those places into Greek classical times. He found that the cult of Poseidon predominated rather heavily. He therefore concluded that in the Mycenaean age, Sea King-Poseidon was a more important deity than Zeus himself. The Pylos tablets have now confirmed this conclusion derived from Homer's geography; and by now the archaeologists have also buttressed Homer in yet another way, by finding Mycenaean remains at most of the places Homer mentioned. Again, a long-dead English scholar, Sir William Ridgeway, carefully deduced the system of Homeric land tenure from the stray references to this subject in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Decades later, Ridgeway's deductions have also been largely confirmed by the complex land registers in the Pylos tablets.

p. 89 In the Linear B tablets, for instance, the lists of workmen and the like show that the names Homer gives to his Trojan heroes - Eumedes, Antenor, Glaucus, even Tros and Hector - were common men's names in Mycenaean Greece, along with Greek Homeric heroes' names like Achilles. Close pre-war contacts between Troy and Mycenaean Greece are proven by the finds at Troy of Mycenaean pottery, and in other ways too. For these reason, Blegen and some other scholars incline to think that the Trojans of Troy VI and of Priam's city were actually of Greek stock.

p. 155 Consider, for example, the difference between the authorized and the complete editions of one of the great Civil War documents, the incomparable Mary Boykin Chestnut's Diary from Dixie. This diary of the wife of a great Southern plantation owner who served in Jefferson Davis's sub-cabinet was first published forty years or so after the Civil War by Mrs. Chestnut's Charlestonian heirs, who edited it heavily before publication. The complete edition was published nearly half a century later - and by Northerners. The complete edition contains passage after passage vividly describing every dark feature of the slave economy - the Negroes on the auction block, their plight on the harsher plantations, the fear of their slaves that lurked in so many plantation owner's minds, the embittering (p.156) suspicion that their husbands had slave-mistresses which lurked in the minds of many plantation owners' wives, and so on and on. But if you read the authorized edition you find nothing inappropriate to the trying title which Mrs. Chestnut's heirs supplied - all the bravery, and luxury, and final tragedy of the slave-owning South are there, but the ugly underpinnings of the slave system are hardly noticed in the heirs' edition of Diary from Dixie. In face the heirs' edition, which good Charlestonians still prefer, resembles Homer in the special sense that it is quite accurate except for the omissions; but the omissions are important enough to change the whole picture as soon as they are restored.

p. 184 This radical revision of the orthodox view of what happened at Knossos has recommended itself to Blegen and Palmer, and more recently to others as well, because it has two major advantages. In the first place, the revision, justifies Homer . . . If the Knossos story continued to 1200 B.C. and beyond, instead of ending in a holocaust in 1400, the story leaves ample room for Idomeneus; otherwise Idomeneus has to be elaborately equivocated out of sight, except by the diminishing minority of scholars who think there is no truth in Homer anyway.

p. 202 In the first place, the whole history of scholarship shows that when a basic element of an established theory has been shown to be dead-wrong, it is extremely dangerous to react by trying to defend and preserve every other element of the challenged theory. The safer and wiser reaction is to recognize that a theory which was wrong in one part may be wrong in other parts, and therefore to begin a fundamental reappraisal of all the facts - "a new analysis, without passion," such as Professor van Effenterre has suggested. At least that much is called for by the upheaval in the old theories about the Aegean Bronze Age that began with Blegen's discovery of the Pylos tablets and ended with Ventris' revelation that Linear B was Greek after all.