



From Mycenae to Homer: A Study in Early Greek Literature and Art (Routledge Library Editions: Homer)

T. B. L. Webster

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This book, first published in 1958, aims to describe Greek art and poetry within this ambiguous period of ancient history (often referred to as the Greek 'Dark Ages'), and to explore the possibilities of learning about Mycenaean civilisation from its own documents and not only from archaeology.

Specifically, Webster utilises Michael Ventris' decipherment of Linear B in 1952 – which proved that Greek was spoken in the Mycenaean world – to determine the general contours of aesthetic development from Mycenae to the time of the written composition of the Homeric epics. Because they record Mycenaean civilisation in Mycenaean terminology, while Homer was writing in Ionian Greek at the beginning of the *polis* civilisation, they show how much in Homer is in fact Mycenaean. Further, where it is clear that these Mycenaean elements cannot have survived until Homer's time, they tell us something about the poetry which connected the two.

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