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978-1-108-06091-2 - The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean Relations: With Illustrations from Recent Cretan Finds

Arthur John Evans

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### The Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean Relations

Sir Arthur John Evans (1851–1941), the pioneer of ancient Cretan archaeology, most famously excavated the ruins of Knossos and uncovered the remains of its Bronze Age Minoan civilisation (as detailed in *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, also reissued in this series). In this highly illustrated work, first published in 1901, Evans surveys the recent archaeological evidence from his dig at Knossos as well as from other locations around the Mediterranean. He describes a variety of religious objects and symbols, especially those concerned with sacred stones, pillars and trees, which Evans argues are characteristic of religious worship in the Mycenaean period. He considers in particular the importance of the Cretan double-axe symbol, the labrys, its close link with depictions of bulls and its association with the labyrinth of Knossos. Elsewhere he examines the symbolism of the Lion Gate at Mycenae and finds parallels with similar artefacts found in Crete and Egypt.

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM RECENT CRETAN FINDS

BY  
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*WITH A COLOURED PLATE AND SEVENTY FIGURES IN THE TEXT*

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS work is reproduced by permission from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. It was communicated in its present form to the Hellenic Society in November, 1900, but the views here expressed regarding the character of Mycenaean worship and such external features as the baetylic pillars within the shrines and the 'horns of consecration' were, in their main outlines, first put forth by me in a paper on '*Pillar and Tree Worship in Mycenaean Greece*,' read in the Anthropological Section of the British Association at Liverpool in 1896. A short abstract of this was published in the Annual Report of the Association. In November, 1899, the part specially affecting Dr. Reichel's theory of the '*Thronkultus*' was read to the Oxford Philological Society.

It had been my original intention to incorporate the present study in a work, in course of preparation by me, on the Mycenaean gems and signets, but the fresh evidence supplied by the Cretan discoveries has induced me to put it forth in a separate form. This seemed the more desirable, since the most recently expressed views on the subject, as for instance those contained in Dr. H. von Fritze's essay, '*Die Mykenischen Goldringe und ihre Bedeutung für das Sacralwesen*' (*Strena Helbigiana*, 1900, p. 73 *seqq.*), though in certain respects supplying a welcome corrective to Dr. Reichel's system, still, as I venture to think, betray a very imperfect recognition of

some of the most essential features of the cult. The Author moreover still maintains the now antiquated and wholly untenable position that the engraved Signet-Rings found at Mycenae and elsewhere are imported 'Phoenician' fabrics. So far, on the other hand, as my own views are confirmatory of those expressed by Dr. von Fritze in the paper above cited, by Dr. Wolters in his remarks on the Knossian fresco, and again by Dr. Furtwängler in his monumental work on Ancient Gems, they have at least the value of having been independently arrived at.

Great pains have been taken in this work to secure adequate reproductions of the Mycenaean gems and signets, which are here, in almost all cases, enlarged to three diameters. For this purpose magnified photographs of the casts were first made, which (checked at the same time by the casts) have formed the basis of drawings by Mr. F. Anderson and Mr. C. J. Praetorius. In the case of the more convex intaglios photographic reproductions by themselves yield imperfect representations of the designs, owing to the deep shadow which, with a single light, is thrown over a large part of the field. It is hoped however that, by the double process referred to, the greatest possible measure of clearness and accuracy may have been attained. A few drawings were executed by Monsieur E. Gilliéron at Athens, who also made the very careful copy of the Temple Fresco reproduced in the Plate by Mr. Griggs.

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#### COLOURED PLATE.

**Façade of Small Mycenaean Temple from Fresco  
found in the Palace at Knossos** ... ..

#### ERRATA.

- P. 107, Note 1, for “ἀκόνκιον” read “ἀκόντιον.”  
P. [127], 12th line from bottom, for “object as its possession” read  
“object of its possession.”  
P. [140], 9th line from bottom, for “lentoid intaglio” read “cylinder.”  
P. [152], line 22, for “Eebani” read “Heabani.”  
P. 156, bottom, for “archaeological” read “archaeological.”  
P. 181, line 7, for “human divinity” read “departed human being.”



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