

## 'THE EARLIER RELIGION OF GREECE IN THE LIGHT OF CRETAN DISCOVERIES

IT is now thirty-five years since, in a paper read in the Anthropological Section of the British Association at Liverpool, I set forth the results of my earlier researches on the primitive Religion of prehistoric Greece and in 1900, in a somewhat amplified form, these were laid before the Hellenic Society, and finally published in my work on *Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult*.<sup>1</sup>

Those researches, based mainly on superficial explorations and the evidence of early seal-stones collected by me on Cretan soil, antedated the epoch-making results brought to light by the excavations of the Great Palaces at Knossos and elsewhere. The very term 'Minoan' was as yet un-minted. 'Mycenaean' Greece still stood in the foreground as representing an exotic and unexplained phenomenon not yet recognized as, in the main, merely a later offshoot of a much older culture, stage beyond stage of which could be traced in the 'Mid-sea' land where it is now seen to link up the earliest civilization on European soil with that of the Nile Valley and of the Ancient East. The Phoenician still was being constantly invoked as a *Deus ex machina*.

It might perhaps be thought that results arrived at when our knowledge of the greater monuments of Minoan Crete was still practically non-existent had lost their value. Happily, however, though the facts on which these earlier conclusions were based have been largely supplemented by the later discoveries, they concerned fundamentally an early religious stratum the general character of which has not been affected by the additional material that has so greatly illuminated it.

The cult of such natural objects as holy trees and stones,

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan and Co., 1901: reproduced from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.