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**Abstract:** *This article is devoted to the Cretan-Mycenaean era and Greek mythology. About the literary adaptation of the ancient fairy tale “Cupid and Psyche” in the novel by a Roman writer of the 2nd century. n. e. Apuleius “Metamorphoses”*

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Only one literary adaptation of an ancient tale has reached us, completely preserving its stylistic forms, but it dates back to a later time: this is the tale of “Cupid and Psyche” in a novel by a Roman writer of the 2nd century. n. e. Apuleius “Metamorphoses” (pp. 475 – 476).

There is, however, a whole series of indirect data about the Greek fairy tale, and material of the “fairy tale” type is used in many monuments of ancient literature (Odyssey, comedies). Among the myths about Greek “heroes” there are plots that are very close to fairy tales. This is, for example, the myth of Perseus. King Acrisius of Argos received an oracle's prediction that he would be killed by the grandson who would be born from his daughter. Frightened by the oracle, he locked his daughter, the girl Danae, in an underground copper chamber.

The god Zeus entered Danae, turning into golden rain for this purpose, and Danae gave birth to a son, Perseus, from Zeus. Then Acrisius put Danae and her child in a box and threw them into the sea. The box was washed up by the waves. Serif, where he was picked up and the prisoners in him were released.

When Perseus grew up, he received an order from the king of the island to obtain the head of Medusa, one of the three monstrous Gorgons, whose appearance turned anyone who looked at her into stone. The Gorgons had heads covered with dragon scales, teeth the size of pigs, copper arms and golden wings. With the help of the gods Hermes and Athena, Perseus arrived to the Gorgon sisters, the three Phorkids, old women from birth, who all three had one eye and one tooth and used them alternately.

Having taken possession of the eye and tooth of the Phorkids, Perseus forced them to show him the way to the nymphs, who provided him with winged sandals, an invisibility cap and a magic bag. With the help of these wonderful objects, as well as a steel sickle donated by Hermes, Perseus completed the task. On sandals, he flew across the ocean to the Gorgons, beheaded the sleeping Medusa with a sickle, looking not directly at her, but at her reflection in the copper shield, hid her head in a bag and, thanks to the invisibility cap, escaped from the pursuit of other Gorgons.

On the way back, he freed the Ethiopian princess Andromeda, who had been given over to the power of a sea monster, and took her as his wife. Then he returned with his mother and wife to Argos; the frightened Acrisius hastened to leave his kingdom, but Perseus subsequently accidentally killed him during a gymnastic competition.

However, the wealth of “fairy-tale” elements that we find in the myth of Perseus is already a largely passed stage for Greek mythology. In the era immediately preceding the earliest literary monuments, in Greek mythology there was a tendency to eliminate or at least soften the crudely miraculous elements of legends. The figures of Greek myth are almost completely humanized.

In the mythological systems of many peoples, animals play a significant role; this occurs, for example, in the mythology of the Egyptians or Germans, not to mention more primitive peoples.

The Greeks also went through this stage, but only minor remnants remained of it. The Greeks are characterized by two main categories of mythological images: “immortal” gods, to whom the human appearance and human virtues and vices are attributed, and then mortal people, “heroes”, who are thought of as ancient tribal leaders, ancestors of historically existing tribal associations, founders of cities, etc.

Greek myth-making of the time under review develops mainly in the form of tales about heroes; the gods are assigned a central role only in some special types of myths - in cosmogonies, in cult legends. Another feature of Greek mythology is that the myths are very little burdened with metaphysical philosophizing, which takes place in many Eastern systems that took shape in a class society under the ideological dominance of a closed caste of priests.

The “soil of Greek art” was mythology in its most humanized form, however, the more primitive forms of mythological ideas did not die, clothed in the folk genres of fairy tales or fables. Finally, mention should be made of small folklore forms, rules of folk wisdom, proverbs, many of which have become widespread among the peoples of Europe (“the beginning is half of the whole,” “one swallow does not make spring,” “a hand washes a hand,” etc.), riddles, spells, etc.

By comparing Greek material with data from ethnography and folkloristics, it is possible to establish only the general level of Greek verbal creativity in the “Pre-literary” period; Ancient literary studies owes important additional information about the development of culture on Greek territory over a number of millennia preceding the written monuments of the Greeks to another related discipline - archaeology.

Thanks to archaeological discoveries, it is now possible to follow the cultural history of the inhabitants of Greece from the Stone Age right up to historical times. In the history of these discoveries, the use of data from Greek mythology played a very significant role. They served as a compass, guiding the path of archaeological research.

Systematic excavations at the sites of ancient Greek settlements were started not by a professional scientist, but by the self-taught Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890), a businessman and enthusiastic lover of Homer’s poems, who stopped commercial activities and devoted his life to archaeological work in places glorified by Homer’s poems.

Schliemann proceeded from the naive conviction that these poems accurately described historical reality, and set as his goal to find the remains of those objects about which the Greek epic narrates. The statement of the problem was unscientific and fantastic, since Homer’s poems are not a historical chronicle, but an artistic adaptation of tales about heroes. Excavations undertaken for this purpose seemed doomed to failure, but they led to a completely unexpected result, much more significant than the question of the accuracy of Homer's descriptions.

The places where the action of the heroic tales of the Greeks was confined turned out to be centers of ancient culture, surpassing in its richness the culture of the early periods of historical Greece. This culture, called Mycenaean, after the city of Mycenae, where it was first discovered in 1876 by Schliemann, was already unknown to ancient historians.

Vague memories of her are preserved only in the oral tradition of mythological stories. The instructions of the myth attracted Schliemann's attention to Fr. Crete, but serious archaeological work on Crete was carried out only by the Englishman Evans at the beginning of the 20th century, and then it turned out that the Mycenaean culture is in many respects a continuation of the more ancient and very unique Cretan culture.

All branches of early Greek culture are connected by numerous threads with its historical predecessors, the Mycenaean and Cretan cultures. Already in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. e. we find in Crete a rich, even lush, material culture, a highly developed art and writing; however, the Cretan writings have not yet been read, and the language in which they are written is unknown.

It is also unknown to which group of tribes the carriers of the Cretan culture belonged. Until the texts are disassembled, Cretan culture is represented to us only by archaeological material and remains to a large extent an “atlas without text”: the most important questions concerning the social structure of Cretan society continue to cause controversy.

There is no doubt, however, that in Crete we find numerous remnants of matriarchy, and in the religious beliefs of the Cretans a female deity associated with agriculture occupied a central place. The Cretan goddess closely resembles the “great mother” who was revered by the peoples of Asia Minor as the embodiment of the power of fertility. Cretan monuments often depict cult scenes accompanied by dancing, singing, and playing musical instruments.

Thus, a sarcophagus painted with pictures of sacrifice was found: one of these paintings depicts a man holding a stringed instrument, very similar to the later Greek cithara; in another painting the sacrifice is accompanied by a flute. There is a vase depicting a procession: participants march to the sound of a sistrum (percussion instrument) and sing with their mouths wide open. Cretan musicians and dancers enjoyed fame in later times.

It is believed that Greek musical instruments are in continuity with Cretan ones. It is characteristic that the names of Greek instruments for the most part cannot be explained from the Greek language; many genres of Greek lyric poetry, elegy, iambic, paean, etc. also have non-Greek names; probably these names were inherited by the Greeks from their predecessor cultures.

From the second half of the 2nd millennium, the decline of Crete began and, in parallel with it, the flourishing on the Greek mainland of that culture, which is conventionally called “Mycenaean”. In the art of the “Mycenaeans” a strong influence of Crete is noticeable, but the “Mycenaean” society differs in many ways from the Cretan one. It is patriarchal, and in the “Mycenaean” religion a male deity and the cult of ancestors and tribal leaders play a significant role. The powerful fortifications of the “Mycenaean” castles, dominating the surrounding settlements, indicate a far-advanced process of social stratification and, perhaps, the beginning of the formation of classes.

In contrast, the art of Crete often depicts scenes of war and hunting. In some respects, the cultural level of the mainland is lower than on Crete: thus, the art of writing was used by the Mycenaeans only to a very small extent. The tribes that inhabited Greece at this time are repeatedly mentioned in Egyptian texts under the names “Ahaivasha” and “Danauna”, and these names correspond to the names “Achaeans” and “Danaans”, which are used in the Homeric epic to designate the Greek tribes as a whole. The bearers of the “Mycenaean” culture are thus the direct predecessors of the historical Greek tribes.

From Egyptian and Hittite documents, it is clear that the “Achaeans” raided Egypt, Cyprus, Asia Minor. The “Mycenaean” era played a decisive role in the formation of Greek mythology. The action of the most important Greek myths is confined to those places that were the centers of the “Mycenaean” culture, and the more significant the role of the area in the “Mycenaean” era, the more myths around this area are concentrated, although in later times many of these areas have already lost all significance.

It is even very possible that among the Greek heroes there are real historical figures (in the recently sorted documents of the Hittites, the names of the leaders of the Akhhiyawa people, i.e., the Achaeans, were read, similar to names known from Greek myths - however, the reading and interpretation of these names is not yet possible considered quite reliable).

The “Mycenaean” era is the historical basis of the main core of Greek heroic tales, and these tales contain many elements of mythologized history - this is the indisputable conclusion arising from a comparison of archaeological data with Greek myths; and here “the past reality is reflected in the fantastic creations of mythology.”

Mythological stories, which themselves often go back to much more ancient times, are framed in Greek legend based on the history of the “Mycenaean” time. Greek mythology also retained

memories of the more ancient culture of Crete, but much vaguer. The brilliant results of the excavations of Schliemann and other archaeologists, who based their work on Greek legends, are explained by the fact that these legends capture the general picture of the relationships between Greek tribes in the second half of the 2nd millennium, as well as many details of the culture and life of that time.

From this we can draw a conclusion that is of great importance for the history of Greek literature. If the Homeric poems, separated from the “Mycenaean” era by a number of centuries, nevertheless reproduce numerous features of this era, transforming it into a mythological past, then, in the absence of written sources, this can only be explained by the strength of the epic tradition and the continuity of oral poetic creativity from the “Mycenaean” » the period before the time of the design of Homeric poems.

The origins of the Greek epic must be traced back, in any case, to the “Mycenaean” era, and perhaps to earlier times. By the end of the 2nd millennium, the “Mycenaean” culture was in decline, and the so-called “dark period” of Greek history, stretching until the 8th – 7th centuries. BC e., - it’s time for decentralization, small independent communities, weakening foreign trade relations.

Despite the well-known technical progress (the transition from bronze to iron), there is a decrease in the general level of material culture: the fortresses and treasures of the “Mycenaean” time are already becoming a legend. During this “dark” period, immediately preceding the most ancient literary monuments, the Greek tribes of historical time were finally formed, the Greek language was developed, breaking up into a number of dialects, according to the main groups of tribes.

The Achaean-Aeolian tribes occupied northern and partly central Greece, part of the Peloponnese and a number of northern islands of the Aegean Sea; most of the islands and Attica in central Greece were inhabited by Ionian tribes; The Dorians strengthened themselves in the east and south of the Peloponnese and on the southern islands, leaving, however, significant traces in northern and central Greece.

In a similar way, the Greek tribes were distributed on the Asia Minor coast; from the north - the Aeolians, in the center - the Ionians, a small strip in the south was occupied by the Dorians. The advanced region of Greece in the 8th – 7th centuries. there was Asia Minor, primarily Ionia.

Here, for the first time, new economic forms generated by the emergence of a slave-owning society flourished. Here the process of formation of policies as a specific form of the ancient state took place most intensively. Here the Greeks came into direct contact with the more ancient class cultures of the slave-owning East. With Ionia in the 6th century. The origin of Greek science and philosophy is connected, but even before that time it became the cultural center in which Greek literature first took shape.

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