

Who were they?

Where did they come from?

What did they accomplish?

Where did they go?

The Minoans and Mycenaeans



Minoan civilization arose on the island of Crete.

Legacy (or gift from the past)

- Their legacy was as masters of the sea and great shipbuilders.



Bull Leaping

- Bull leaping or bull fighting was both a sport and a religious ceremony. Don't try this at home.



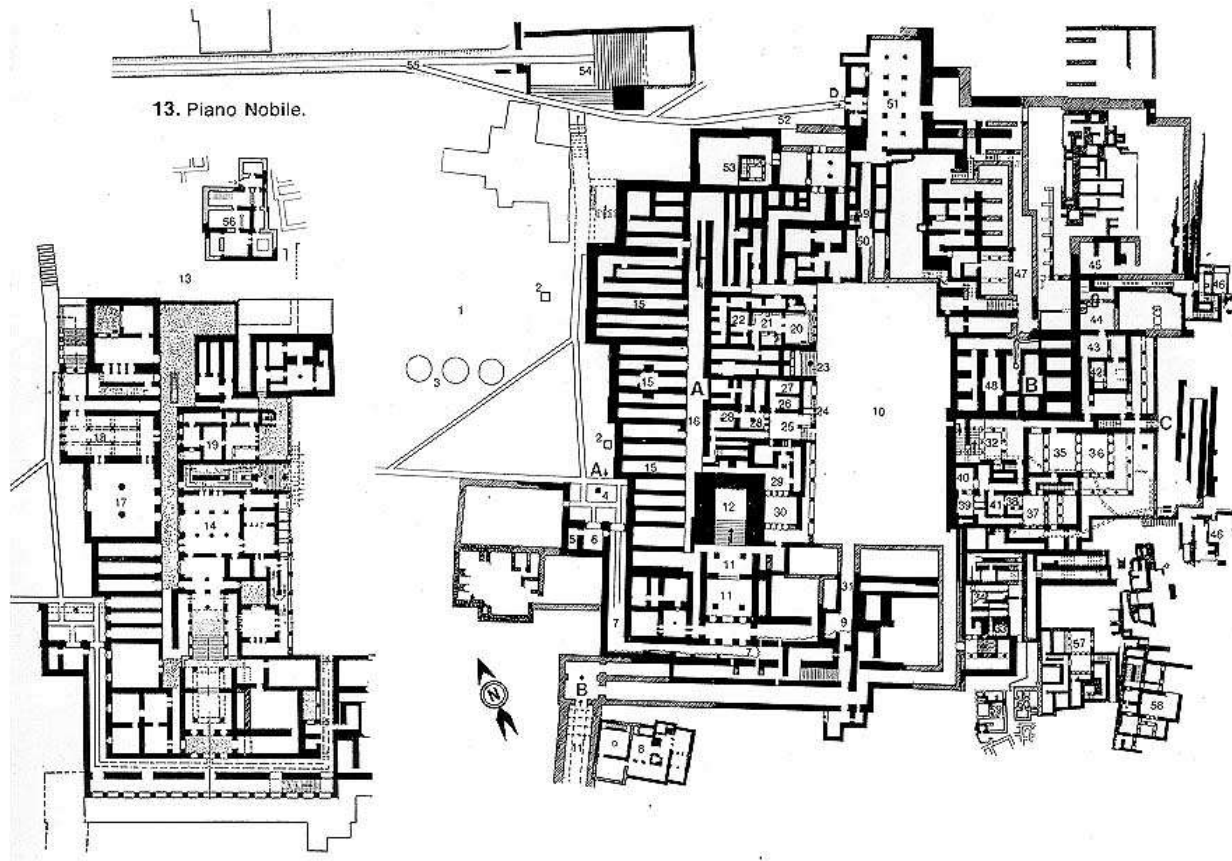
Bull-Jumping
Fresco from the palace at Knossos

The Palace



- One of the largest cities on Crete was Knossos. A great palace was located there - the Palace of Knossos where the legendary King Minos lived.

The palace had several
passageways.



Labyrinth

- The palace had a network of paths through which it was difficult to find one's way.
- Labyrinth means double ax so the palace was called the "House of the Double Ax."
- In this labyrinth, it is said, lived a Minotaur - a beast that was half man and half bull.
- To construct a labyrinth, go to
- www.puzzles.com/PuzzlePlayground/KnossosLabyrinth/KnossosLabyrinth.htm



The Minotaur. Copy of a composition of the classical period. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML

Every year for nine years, seven youths and maidens came as tribute from Athens. These young people were also locked in the labyrinth for the Minotaur to feast upon.



- When the Greek hero Theseus reached Athens, he learned of the Minotaur and the sacrifices, and wanted to end this. He volunteered to go to Crete as one of the victims. Upon his arrival in Crete, he met Ariadne, Minos's daughter, who fell in love with him. She promised she would provide the means to escape from the maze if he agreed to marry her. When Theseus did, she gave him a simple ball of thread, which he was to fasten close to the entrance of the maze. He made his way through the maze, while unwinding the thread, and he stumbled upon the sleeping Minotaur. He beat it to death and led the others back to the entrance by following the thread.



W. Russell Flint, 1880-1969: Theseus and the Minotaur.
Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.

Why did they end?

- No one is certain why Minoan civilization came to an end. But about 1400 B.C., control of the sea and Crete passed to the Mycenaeans.



Where did they come from?

- The Mycenaeans came from the grasslands of southern Russia to the lowlands of Greece. They traded with and learned much from the Minoans.



Trojan War/Homer's Iliad



- The Mycenaeans went to war with Troy because Troy was controlling a trade route and unfairly taxing ships going from southern Russia to Greece.

The Iliad

- About 500 years later, a blind Greek poet, Homer, told the story of the Trojan war - but not quite exactly as it happened.



W. Friedrich: The wooden horse, c.1894. Photo ©Maicar Forlag-GML

Homer's version

- The Trojan prince Paris fell in love with Helen, the wife of the Mycenaean king. He kidnapped her, taking her to Troy. The Mycenaeans followed to get her back.
- After ten years of fighting, Odysseus suggested they build a large wooden horse and place their best soldiers in it. Then the rest of the Mycenaeans returned to their ships and sailed away.

When the Trojans saw the horse

- and the soldiers leaving, they thought it was a gift and pulled it into the city. Once out of sight, Odysseus turned the ships around and began to sail back toward Troy. During the night, the soldiers inside the horse climbed out, opened the gate and let the returning soldiers into Troy.



THE TROJAN HORSE



What happened. . .

- The Mycenaeans killed the king of Troy and burned the city.
- Then they returned to their homes with Helen.



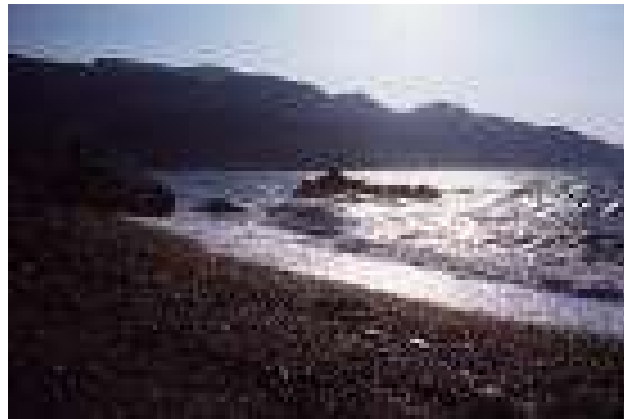
Brueghel, Jan the Elder. *The Burning of Troy* (c.1671-72)

A Dark Age

The Mycenaeans never returned to a peaceful existence. The Dorians drove them out of Greece.

The Dark Age

- The Mycenaeans settled in the Aegean islands and on the western shore of Asia Minor. Later, this was known as Ionia.



One step back. . .

- This began a time of wandering and killing. Trade stopped. Many skills were forgotten including how to read and write, fresco painting, working with ivory and gold, etc.



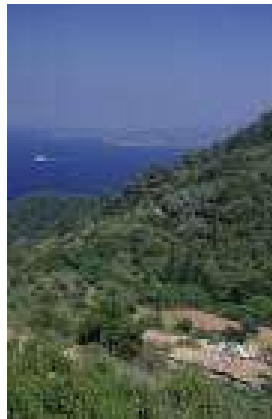
Here we go again. . .

- The people had to create a new civilization on their own beginning with herding and farming.



A New Name:

- Eventually they developed independent communities and began calling themselves Hellenes, or Greeks.



The rest is history.



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