The Minoans and Mycenaeans
Minoan civilization arose on the island of Crete. Existed from 3000-1400 BCE
Daily Life

- Peaceful
- Traded with Egypt and Mesopotamia
- Had a written language called Linear A
Religion

• The Minoans were Polytheistic

• Bull leaping or bull fighting was both a sport and a religious ceremony.
Legacy (or gift from the past)

- Their legacy was as masters of the sea and great shipbuilders.
- Built large ships with 2-3 sails.
- Very advanced for their time
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.
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.
Photo © Maicar Förlag – GML.
Why did they end?

- No one is certain why Minoan civilization came to an end. Some say a volcanic explosion destroyed the civilization. But about 1400 B.C., control of the sea and Crete passed to the Mycenaeans.
Where did they come from?

- The Mycenaeans lived on the mainland of Greece, Peloponnesus Peninsula
- They traded with and learned much from the Minoans.
- Existed from 1400 B.C.E to 1100 B.C.E
Daily Life

- Very War Like and Aggressive
- Had fortresses on hilltops
- Cities were heavily fortified
- Largest city was Mycenae
- Adopted writing system from Minoans
Trojan War and Mycenaean

- Mycenaean fought the Trojans in a war that lasted for 10 years
- Mycenaean won by tricking the Trojans
- Homer wrote *the Iliad* and *The Odyssey* about the Trojan War and return home
A Dark Age

- Myceneans were conquered by the Dorian and fled the east, Asia Minor
- This time was a time of wandering and killing.
- Trade Stopped
- Skills were lost
Here we go again. . .

• The Dorians 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… And the rest is history