

CHAPTER

9

Beginnings

2800 B.C.–750 B.C.

Mycenean fresco
of women driving
a chariot ▼



▲ Mycenaean gold earrings

2800 B.C.
Minoan
civilization begins

2000 B.C.
Mycenaeans move
toward Greece

1400 B.C.
Mycenaeans take
control of Crete

1250 B.C.
Mycenaeans
attack Troy in
Asia Minor

750 B.C.
Homer writes the
Iliad and the
Odyssey

Chapter Focus



Read to Discover

- What life was like for the Minoans.
- How geography influenced the early peoples who lived on Crete and the Balkan Peninsula.
- What life was like for the Mycenaeans.
- How the “Dark Age” affected the Aegean world.



Terms to Learn

bull leaping
labyrinth
parchment
shrines
megaron
tenants
civil wars



People to Know

Theseus
Homer
Odysseus
Helen



Places to Locate

Crete
Balkan Peninsula
Troy
Asia Minor
Ionia

Why It's Important

Greek civilization grew out of a combination of two earlier civilizations, Minoan (muh nō' uhn) and Mycenaean (mīsuh nē' uhn). Due to the geography of the land, both became great sea powers. Although their power was eventually destroyed, the Minoans and the Mycenaeans left an important *legacy* (leg' uh sē), or gift from the past, to the Greeks.

SECTION 1 The Minoans

Minoan civilization rose around 2800 B.C. on Crete (krēt), an island in the Mediterranean Sea. The Minoans, who were also known as Cretans, grew wheat, barley, grapes, and olives. When the olive groves and vineyards produced more than was needed, the Minoans traded the surplus for goods they could not grow or make on Crete.

Since there were many forests on Crete, the Minoans learned to work with wood and became good carpenters. They also learned to work with metal. They used their metalworking and carpentry skills to build ships and began to earn a living from trade instead of farming.

When pirates threatened them, the Minoans changed the way they built their ships so the ships could go faster. They made them slimmer, with two or three masts instead of one. The Minoans also put a deck over the heads of rowers to protect them.



Chapter Overview

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at humanheritage.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 9—Chapter Overviews** to preview this chapter.



Minoan Jar

and placed a large wooden beam in the *prow*, or front part of the ship. This was used to smash a hole in enemy ships to sink them.

Over time, the Minoans drove off the pirates. By about 2000 B.C., Crete was the world's first important seafaring civilization. Minoan merchant ships traveled far to trade pottery, leather and bronze armor, and metal jewelry.

The People The Minoans were a small people with bronzed skin and long dark hair. Men wore striped loincloths, long robes embroidered with flowers, or trousers that bagged at the knees. Women wore full skirts and short-sleeved jackets that laced in front. The Minoans had small waists and wore tight belts to show them off. They also wore jewelry, such as gold and silver earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and rings.

The Minoans spent their time in a variety of ways. Men farmed and fished. They raised cattle, long-horned sheep, and goats. They also served in the navy and the royal guard. Women performed household duties, attended sporting events, and went hunting in chariots.

The people of Crete loved sports. They built what was probably the world's first arena. It stood in the open air. Stone steps formed grandstands, where about 500 people could sit and watch the action. The king and the royal party had their own special box seats.

Boxing matches were held in the arena. **Bull leaping**, a form of bullfighting, was also held there. A young man and woman "fought" the bull together. The man would grab the bull's horns. As the bull raised its head to toss him, the man would do a somersault, landing on his feet on the bull's back. He would then do a back flip. Standing behind the bull, the woman would catch her partner as he landed. Many experts believe bull leaping was a religious ceremony as well as a sport.

Cities and Palaces The Minoans built many cities, which were different from those of other ancient civilizations in two ways. At the heart of each Minoan city stood a palace rather than a temple. Also, Minoan cities did not have walls around them. Instead, people depended on the sea and navy for protection.

One of the largest cities of Crete was Knossos (kuh nahs' uhs). It covered about 28 acres, or 11.2 hectares. About one fifth of the area was taken up by a five-story palace that served as a government building, temple, factory, and warehouse. Its walls were built of stone and sun-dried brick framed with wooden beams. The Minoans decorated the inside walls with brightly colored *frescoes* (fres' kōs), or water color paintings made on damp plaster. The palace had bathrooms with bathtubs and flush toilets. It also had hot and cold running water and portable fireboxes to heat rooms.

 **Reading Check**
What was **bull leaping**?

HISTORY
Online

Student Web Activity

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at humanheritage.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 9—Student Web Activities** to find out more about the Minoans.


The palace had several entrances. Passageways and rooms formed a **labyrinth** (lab' uh rinth), or a network of paths through which it is difficult to find one's way. Because labyrinth means "double ax," the palace was called the "House of the Double Ax." The palace was also called by that name because it was filled with pictures, carvings, and bronze models of a double ax.

Sea captains, merchants, and shipbuilders lived in houses around the palace. Past their houses stood those of artisans who made beautiful cups and vases and designed delicate jewelry.

Houses were built side by side around courtyards. Most were two stories high. Lower walls were made of stone, upper walls of sun-dried brick. On the inside walls were painted scenes of daily life. Each house also had its own well and drains.

Many early Minoan houses had no entrance from the street. A person went in or out through the roof and lowered a ladder over the side of the house. Later, wooden doors and windows made of oiled and tinted **parchment** (parch' muhnt), or thin animal skin, were added.

 **Reading Check**
What is a **labyrinth**?

 **Reading Check**
How did Minoans use **parchment** in building their homes?

BULL LEAPING This painting from Knossos shows Minoans bull leaping. In the center, a man leaps over the bull's back. Another man grips the bull's horns so that it will lift its head and toss him. The woman behind the bull prepares to catch the leapers. **What other sporting event was held in a Minoan arena?**





Reading Check

Why did the Minoans build shrines?

Rulers and Religion The rulers of Crete were priest-kings. They made the laws and represented the gods on Earth. The priest-kings would climb to the top of Mount Juktas (yūk' tuhs) to look for a sign from heaven that would tell them the will of the gods. Then, they would tell their people what the gods wanted them to do.

The Minoans had many gods. The main god was the Great Goddess, Mother Earth. She made plants grow and brought children into the world. To honor her, the Minoans built **shrines**, or sacred places to worship, in palaces, on housetops, on hilltops, and in caves. The people believed that hilltops led to heaven, and caves led to the underworld.

Sacred horns made of clay and covered with stucco rested against the back wall of each shrine. A hole between the horns held a bronze double ax. Around the horns were clay models of animals. People left offerings of human hair, fruit, flowers, jewels, and gold at the shrines.

The Minoans believed that certain things were sacred. The lily was their sacred flower. The king wore a plumed crown of lilies and a lily necklace. The double ax was sacred. It stood for the power of Mother Earth and the authority of the king. The dove was sacred because it flew to the heavens.

MINOAN RELIGION This Minoan fresco shows a religious ceremony. As a musician plays the harp, two women and a man carry offerings to a shrine. The double axes with birds sitting on them (left) are symbols of the Great Goddess. **What did Minoans believe about the Great Goddess?**



The Fall of the Minoans No one is certain why Minoan civilization came to an end. What is certain is that about 1400 B.C., control of the sea and of Crete passed to the Mycenaeans.

Legend explains the fall of the Minoans with the story of Theseus (thee' see uhs) and the Minotaur (min' uh tauhr). A young Greek prince named Theseus was brought to Knossos. He was to be sacrificed to the Minotaur, a huge monster the king kept in the palace labyrinth. The Minotaur had the body of a man and the head of a bull and lived on human flesh. Theseus was put into the labyrinth. He fought the monster with a magical sword and killed it. When the Minotaur died, the power of the Minoans died too.

Section 1 Assessment

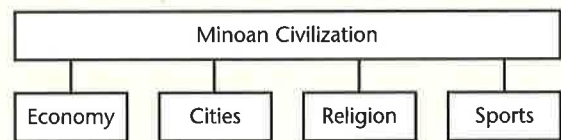
1. **Define:** bull leaping, labyrinth, parchment, shrines.
2. What kind of government did the Minoans have?
3. How did cities in Crete differ from cities in other ancient civilizations?

Critical Thinking

4. **Making Generalizations** How did geography influence the development of the Minoan civilization?

Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a chart like this one, and use it to fill in details on Minoan civilization.




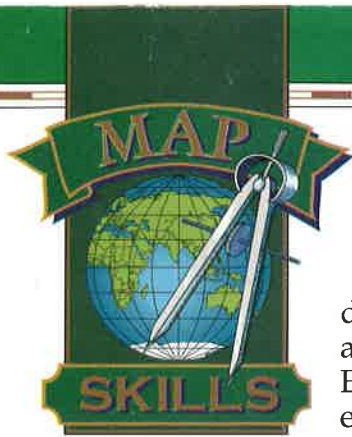
SECTION 2 The Mycenaeans

The Mycenaeans came from the grasslands of southern Russia. Around 2000 B.C., small groups started making their way west into Europe and then south through the Balkan (bol' kuhn) Peninsula. Finally, they settled in the lowlands of Greece.

The Mycenaean kings built fortress-palaces on hilltops. In times of danger or attack, the people in the villages outside the palace walls took shelter within the palace. Its chief feature was the **megaron** (meg' uh ron), or a square room with a fireplace in its center. The king held council meetings and entertained in the megaron.

Land was divided into estates that were farmed either by enslaved people or by **tenants**, or people who live on and work another person's land. Landowners gave the king horses, chariots, weapons, wheat, farm animals, honey, and hides in exchange for protection. Tenants labored to supply many of these items.

 **Reading Check**
How did Mycenaean kings use the **megaron**?
How did **tenants** earn a living?



Reading Longitude

To measure distances east and west on Earth, mapmakers use imaginary lines on maps and globes. These are called lines of **longitude**, or **meridians** (muh rid' ē uhnz), and they run from the North Pole to the South Pole.

Like lines of latitude, meridians are measured in degrees. All meridians are measured from the Prime Meridian, a line of longitude that runs through Greenwich, England. The Prime Meridian is marked 0° . Those lines east of the Prime Meridian are marked with an E, from 1°E to 180°E . Those lines west of the Prime Meridian are marked with a W, from 1°W to 180°W . Unlike lines of

latitude, meridians are not always the same distance from one another. They are farthest apart at the Equator, and closest together at the poles.

Lines of longitude are often used to help specify location. For example, it is much easier to find Troy on the map below if one knows that it is located at about 26°E .

Look at the map below, and answer the following questions:

Map Practice

1. Along which line of longitude was Knossos located?
2. Which early Aegean city was located closest to 20°E ?

The Early Aegean World



Glencoe's **Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 1**, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.

Linking Across Time

Greek Shipping The seafaring tradition has continued from Mycenaean times (below) into the present. Today Greece is among the top ten shipping nations in the world (right). What does the size of this modern Greek ship tell you about Greek trade today?

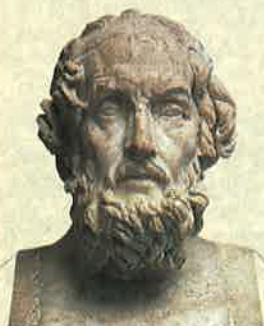


Although they kept large herds of cattle, the Mycenaeans relied on hunting to get more meat. They hunted rabbit, deer, boar, wild bulls, and game birds. Women rode with the men in chariots during the hunt. When hunters were after big game, they used greyhounds. The game was captured with nets or killed with spears, slings, or bows and arrows.

Traders and Pirates Shortly after the Mycenaeans settled in the lowlands of Greece, they were visited by Minoan traders from Crete. The Mycenaeans began to imitate Minoan gold and bronze work. They adapted Cretan script to their own language. They copied Minoan fashions. Most important of all, they learned how to build ships and how to navigate.

The Mycenaeans also began to grow olives. They made presses to squeeze oil from the olives. They used the oil for cooking, as fuel for lamps, and to rub on their bodies. They sold plain oil in large clay jars and perfumed oil in painted vases. Sale of the oil made the Mycenaeans rich. It also led to the founding of trading stations and settlements on nearby islands.

People in History



Homer
c. 700s B.C.

Greek Poet

Homer remains a mystery. Nobody knows what he looked like or exactly when he lived. Ancient Greek *bards*, or poets, called him the "Ionian bard," so maybe Homer came from Ionia. Tradition says Homer was blind, but he was not blind to history. Archaeologists have proven that many of the stories told by Homer actually took place. That means his poems are more than good literature—they are also good history.

Despite their success in trade, the Mycenaeans were warriors at heart. In battle, they used large hide shields with wooden frames, and fought with spears and swords. Their leaders wore fancy bronze armor. At first, the Mycenaeans fought one another. After they learned about shipbuilding and navigation, they outfitted pirate fleets and began to raid nearby lands. By about 1400 B.C., they had replaced the Minoans as the chief power of the Aegean world.

The Trojan War The Mycenaeans are famous for their attack on Troy, a major trading city in Asia Minor. This attack probably took place during the middle 1200s B.C. At the time, the Trojans (trō' juhns) controlled the trade routes to the Black Sea. They made money by taxing the ships that carried grain and gold from southern Russia to Greece.

About 500 years after the Mycenaeans attacked Troy, a blind Greek poet named Homer (hō' muhr) composed a long poem about the event. He called his poem the *Iliad* (il' ē uhd). Homer also composed a poem called the *Odyssey* (ahd' uh sē), which tells about the wanderings of Odysseus (ō dis' ē uhs), a Mycenaean hero of the Trojan War. Homer drew his material for the two

THE TROJAN HORSE The first Greek myths came from the Mycenaeans. Later, the poet Homer gathered these legends and used them to write his works. Here, a painting of the Trojan horse from Homer's poem the *Iliad* is shown. **Where did Homer get his material for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?**



poems from songs and legends that had been handed down by word of mouth. He then added his own descriptions and details of everyday life.

According to Homer's account in the *Iliad*, the Trojan War was fought over a woman. The king of Troy had a son named Paris, who fell in love with Helen, the wife of a Mycenaean king. When Paris took Helen to Troy, her husband became angry. He formed an army and sailed after them. However, the walls of Troy were so tall, thick, and strong that the Mycenaeans could not get into the city. They had to camp on the plain outside the city walls.

After ten years of fighting, the Mycenaeans still had not taken Troy. Then, Odysseus suggested a way they could capture the city. He had the soldiers build a huge, hollow wooden horse. The best soldiers hid inside the horse, while the rest boarded their ships and sailed away.

The Trojans saw the ships leave and thought they had won the war. They did not know the Mycenaean ships would return after dark. The Trojans tied ropes to the wooden horse and pulled it into the city as a victory prize. When they fell asleep, the Mycenaean soldiers hidden inside the horse came out. They opened the city gates and let in the rest of the Mycenaean army. The Mycenaeans killed the king of Troy and burned the city. Then, with Helen, they returned to their homes.


A "Dark Age" The Mycenaeans did not return to peaceful ways after crushing Troy. Instead, a series of **civil wars**, or wars between opposing groups of citizens, broke out. Within 100 years after the end of the Trojan War, almost no Mycenaean fortress-palaces were left. Soon after, a people called Dorians (dōr' ē uhns) entered Greece and conquered the Mycenaeans. Their iron swords were not as well made as Mycenaean bronze swords. Nevertheless, Dorian swords were stronger. Thousands of Mycenaeans fled the Greek mainland and settled in Aegean islands and on the western shore of Asia Minor. These settlements later became known as Ionia (ī ō' nē uh).

As a result of the civil wars and the Dorian invasion, the Aegean world entered a "Dark Age," which lasted until about 800 B.C. It was a time of wandering and killing. Overseas trade stopped. The people of the Aegean region forgot how to write and keep records. The skills of fresco painting and working with ivory and gold disappeared. The Aegean world was cut off from the Middle East, and the people had to create a new civilization on their own.

The people started over. Once again, herding and farming became the main ways of life. Local leaders ruled small areas. These leaders called themselves kings, but they were little more than chiefs. At first, the borders of the areas they ruled kept changing. In time, however, the borders became fixed, and each area became an independent community. The people of these



Mycenaean Goldwork

 **Reading Check**
How did **civil wars** weaken the Mycenaeans?

communities began calling themselves Hellenes (hel' ēns), or Greeks. They worked hard to redevelop their culture and to learn new crafts and skills. The civilization they created flourished from about the 700s B.C. until 336 B.C.

Section 2 Assessment

1. **Define:** megaron, tenants, civil wars.
2. In what ways were the Mycenaeans influenced by Minoan culture?
3. According to Homer, how did the Mycenaeans finally win the Trojan War?
4. What happened in the Aegean world during the "Dark Age"?

Critical Thinking

5. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment**
Why was the growing of olives such an important development for the Aegean world?

Graphic Organizer Activity

6. Draw a diagram like this one, and use it to show the causes and effects of the Trojan War on the Mycenaeans.



Chapter Summary & Study Guide

1. Minoan civilization began to develop on the Mediterranean island of Crete around 2800 B.C.
2. The Minoans started as farmers but eventually turned to trade.
3. Since the Minoans depended on the sea and their ships for protection, their cities were not walled.
4. The Minoans worshiped many gods, the most important of which was the Great Goddess, Mother Earth.
5. Around 1400 B.C., the Mycenaeans took control of the Mediterranean.
6. Instead of cities, the Mycenaeans built fortress-palaces on hilltops.
7. The Mycenaeans learned many things from the Minoans, including a writing script and the skills of shipbuilding and navigation.
8. The Mycenaeans fought a lengthy war against Troy, described in two long poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
9. After years of civil war, the Mycenaeans were conquered by the Dorians.
10. During the 300 years of the "Dark Age," the people of the Aegean area lost many of their skills and had to create a new civilization.



Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at humanheritage.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 9—Self-Check Quiz** to assess your understanding of this chapter.

CHAPTER

9

Assessment

Using Key Terms

Imagine that you are living among the early Greeks. Use the following words to write a paragraph describing the life of the Minoans and the Mycenaeans.

bull leaping labyrinth parchment
shrines megaron tenants
civil wars

Understanding Main Ideas

1. What civilizations combined to form Greek civilization?
2. In what ways were the Minoan people able to gain control of the Mediterranean Sea?
3. What do experts believe about the sport of bull leaping?
4. Why didn't Minoan cities have walls around them?
5. What were some of the features of the palace at Knossos?
6. What did the Mycenaeans build instead of cities?
7. How was the Trojan War described in the *Iliad*?
8. Why did the people of Greece have to create a new civilization?

Critical Thinking

1. How well did the Minoans use their natural resources? Explain your answer.
2. What effect did being an island civilization have on the Minoans?
3. What role did religion play in Minoan daily life?
4. In what ways would the Mycenaean civilization have been different if the people had not learned to build and sail ships?

Graphic Organizer Activity

Culture Create a before-and-after chart like the one shown, and use it to show what the Mycenaean civilization was like before and after contact with the Minoans.



Geography in History

Regions Refer to the map on page 156 as you think about the "Dark Age" of the Aegean region. What human actions and geographic factors made it possible for this period of history to last for 300 years?

Create a poster warning people about the events and geographic factors that led to the "Dark Ages."

Using Your Journal

Review any details you may have noted about the ideas developed by the Minoans. Write a magazine article describing what the Minoans did for sport and entertainment.