

Earliest European civilization – Aegean civilization

- Minoan Crete
- Mycenae Greece

Minoan Crete

- Minoan civilisation developed on Bronze - Age Crete
- It was so called **thalassocracy** – culture whose power was based on powerful fleet.
- Minoan Crete traded with Ancient Egypt and Syria

Bellow: Minoan city on fresco from Akrotiri on Santorini Island



Minoan civilisation chronology:

(according to. Jeremy'ego Ruttera)

- 3100/ 3000 - 1925/1900 B.C. -
prepalatial period
- 1925/1900 – 1750/1720 B.C. -
protopalatial period
- 1750/1720 – 1490/1470 B.C. -
neopalatial period
- 1490/1470 – 1075/1050 B.C. -
postpalatial period



Key events

- about 2000 B.C. - first palaces are built
- about 1750/ 1700 B.C. - destruction of the palaces – connected with huge volcanic eruption on Thera (Santorini)
- XV c. B.C. - Achaean invasion (destruction of the palaces)
- about 1100 B.C. – Doric invasion – destruction of Aegean Crete



What is left of Minoan Crete?

- Myth of Minotaur and the Labyrinth
- Minos the Sage
- Myth of Atlantis
- Earliest script in Europe



Minotaur and Labyrinth of Minos

Theseus story:

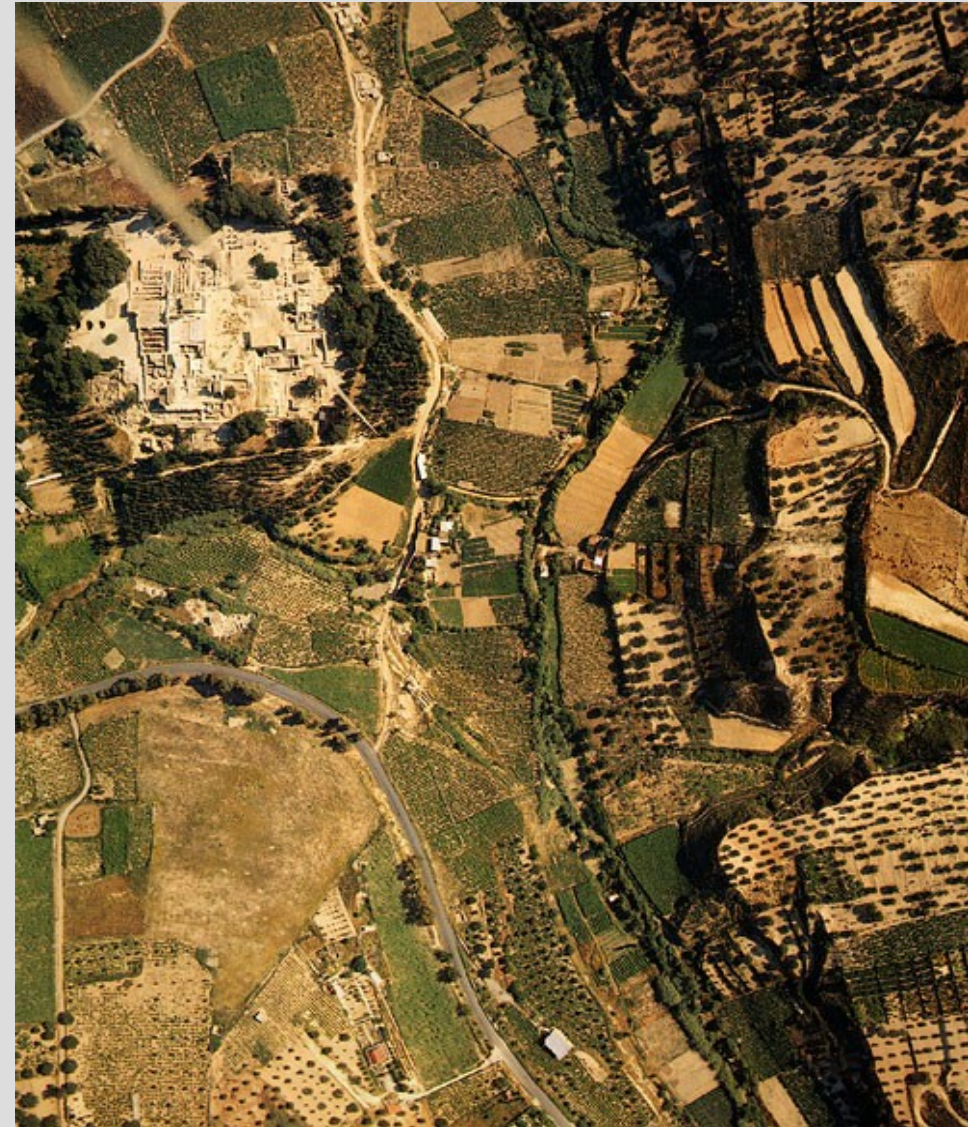
Theseus was son of a king of Athens. The city was forced to pay yearly tribute to Minos, King of Crete. The tribute was consisted of 7 girls and 7 boys, who were later thrown into the Labyrinth to be eaten by Minotaur. Theseus volunteered to be one of seven, and when on Crete he killed Minotaur. The daughter of Minos – Ariadne who gave him a ball of the red fleece thread to help him out of the Maze. Theseus fleeing Crete took Ariadne with him, but later left her on Naxos



Minotaur and Labyrinth of Minos – „rational explanation”

It is believed by many researchers that idea of the Labyrinth on Crete was based on the great Minoan Palaces

Aerial view of Knossos Palace

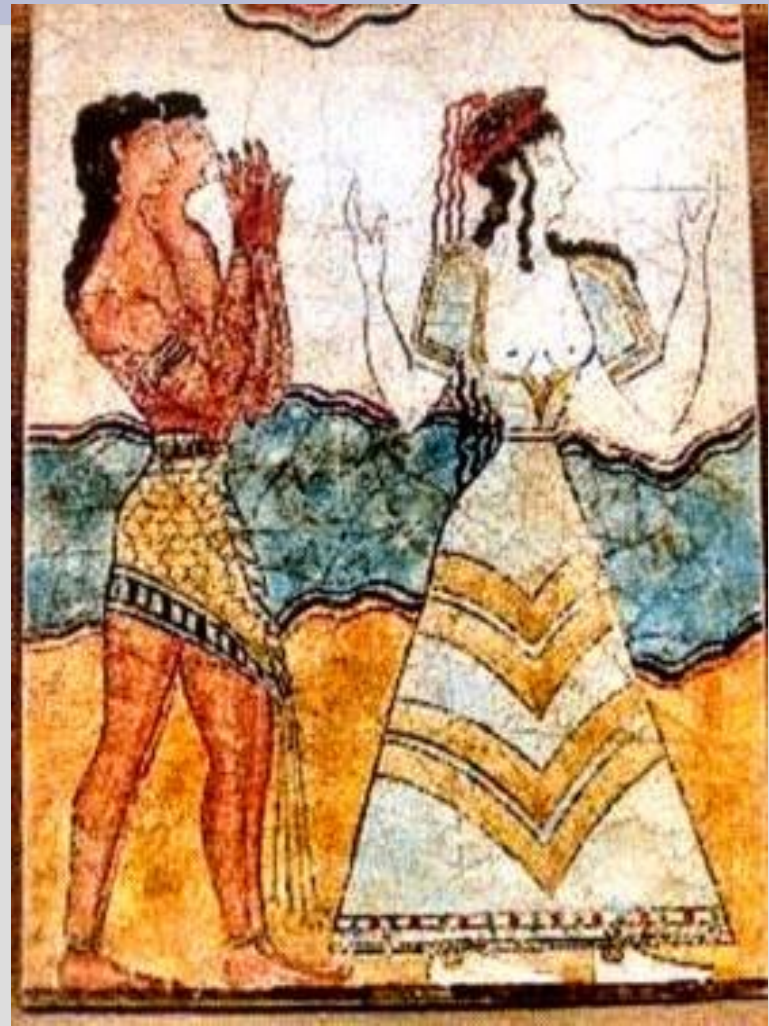


Minotaur and Labyrinth of Minos – „rational explanation”

Artistic vision of Neopalatial Period Knossos Palace



Some frescoes from Knossos:



Some frescoes from Knossos:



Knossos Palace “throne room”:



Knossos Palace: Dolphins mosaic room



Knossos Palace:



Minotaur and Labyrinth of Minos – „rational explanation”

- Minos was probably not a name but a title of a ruler – just like Egyptian Pharaoh
- Minotaur – man with a bull's head is connected with bulls worship on Crete



Atlantis

Description of Atlantis was made by Plato in two of his works:

Timajos and *Kritias*.

According to him it was a powerful kingdom based on an island surrounded by three circles of land and water. It was located behind “Pillars of Heracles” - ancient name of Gibraltar Strait - hence the name Atlantic Ocean

The island sunk in a great disaster.



Atlantis – Thera hypothesis



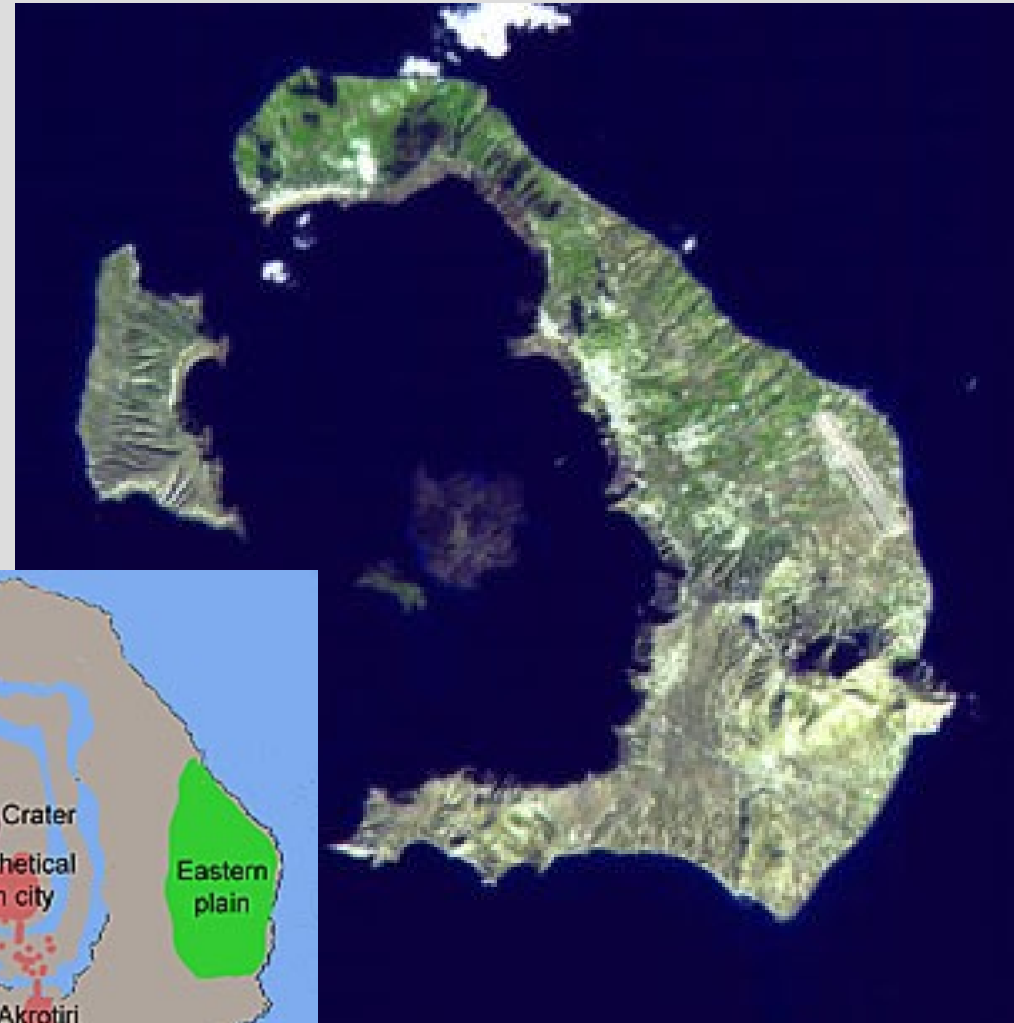
Island Santorini / Thera on Aegean Sea was destroyed by volcanic eruption c. 1750/1700 B.C.

It was one of the largest volcanic eruptions ever. It's remains can be observed in Greenland's glacier. It was noted in China.

Thera was destroyed, probable tsunami devastated coast of Crete and destroyed Minoan fleet. Great climate changes were observed.

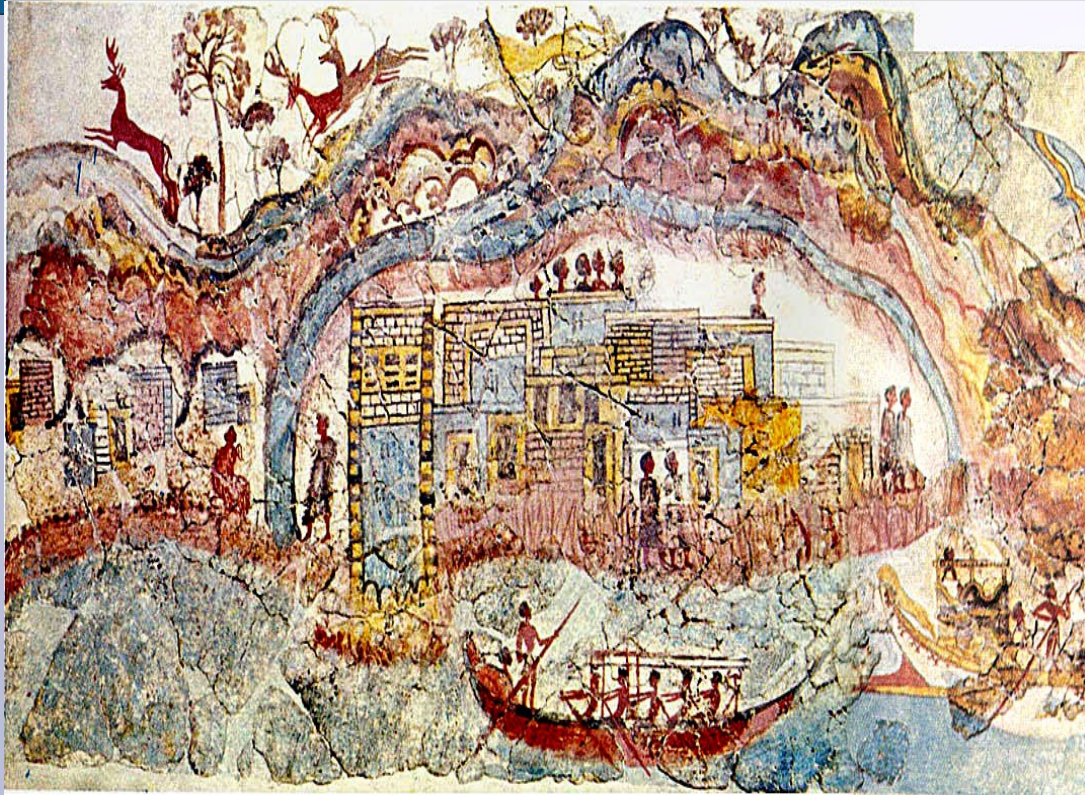


Atlantis – Thera hypothesis



Atlantis – Thera hypothesis

Thera of old



and today



Linear script – first script in Europe

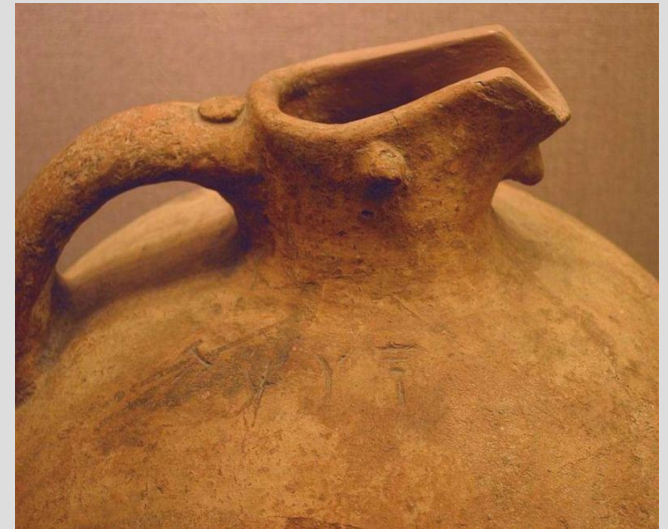
Since about 2000 B.C. Cretean hieroglyphic script develops.

The best known example is Phaistos Disk



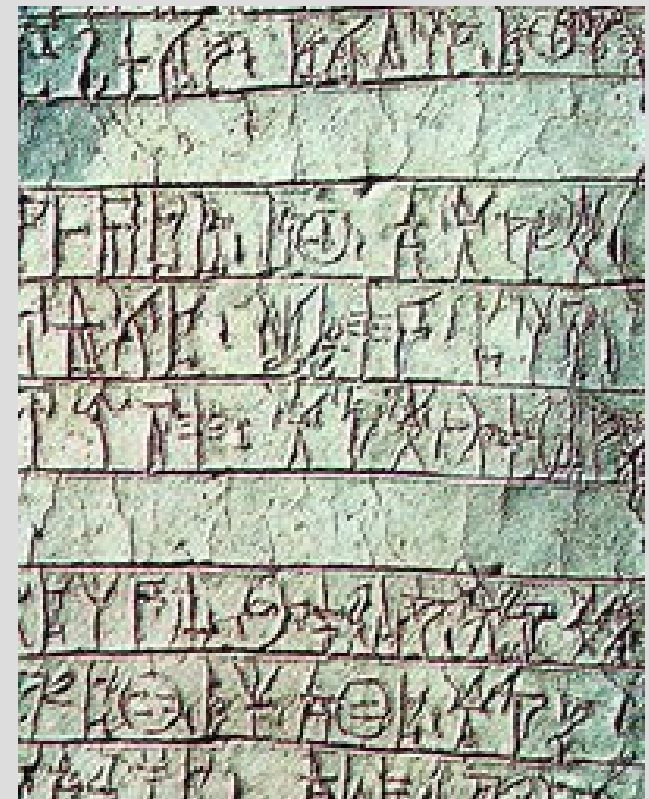
Linear script – first script in Europe

Since XVIII c. B.C. Linear A script develops
It is a syllabic script, since it has same symbols to Linear B script we can understand phonetic values of words written.
We do not understand their meaning. This unknown language is called 'Minoan'



Linear script – first script in Europe

Linear B script shares its symbols with Linear A. It was used since about XIVc. B.C until XII c. B.C. The language used is archaic greek.



Women of Crete



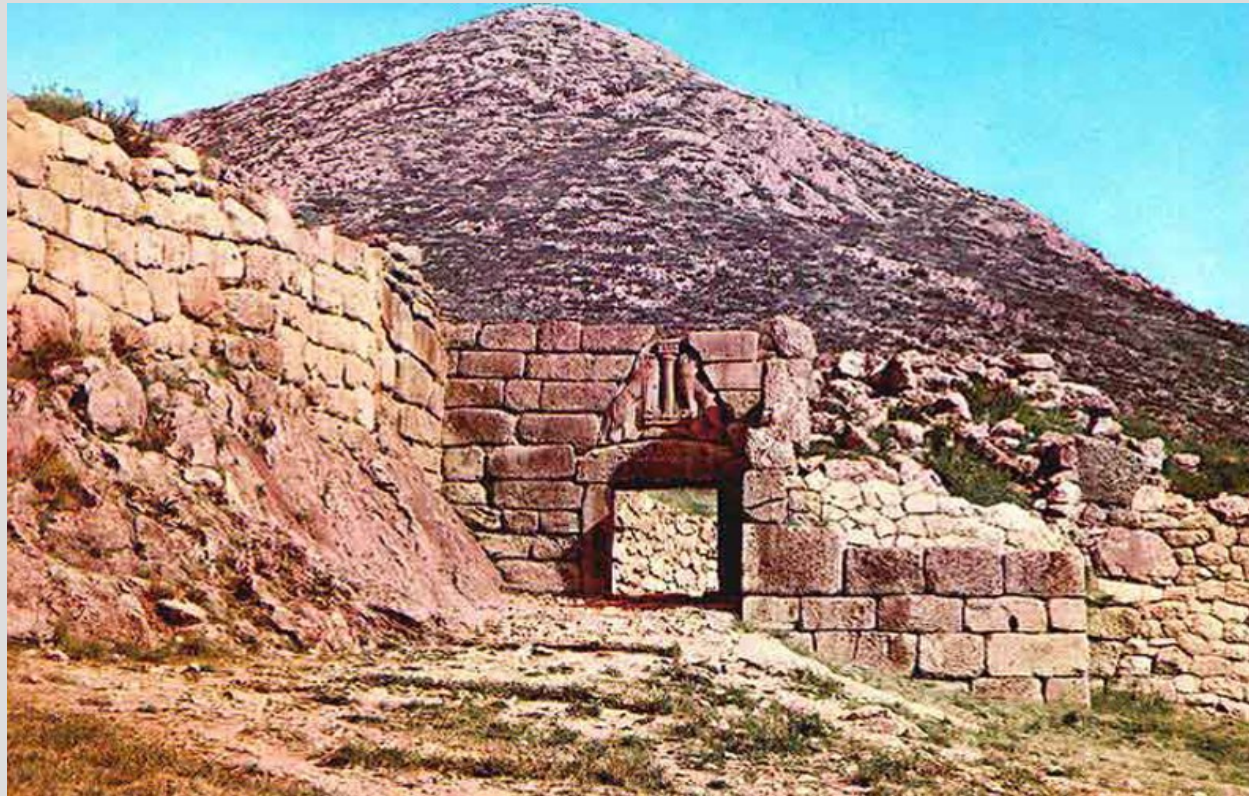
Mycenae civilization

- Bronze Age continental Greece civilization with main centres in Mycenae and Pylos.
- Mycenae people spoke Greek
- Civilization lasted from about 1600 B.C. to c. 1100 B.C. - when it was destroyed by Doric Greeks



What to remember of Mycenaean Greece

- Story of Trojan War



Trojan War

Trojan War was made famous by Homer's epic poem "Illiad" (Illion is another name of Troy).

The beginning of the story (but not epic poem) is the judgement of Paris (prince of Troy) who was to decide which of three goddesses was to receive the title of most beautiful. Each of goddesses tried to bribe him

„Judgement of Paris” by Rubens



Trojan War



Hera offered to make him
king of Europe and Asia
Athena offered wisdom and
skill in war
Aphrodite offered the love
of the world's most
beautiful woman
Choice was obvious :)

Judgement of Paris c. 500 B.C.

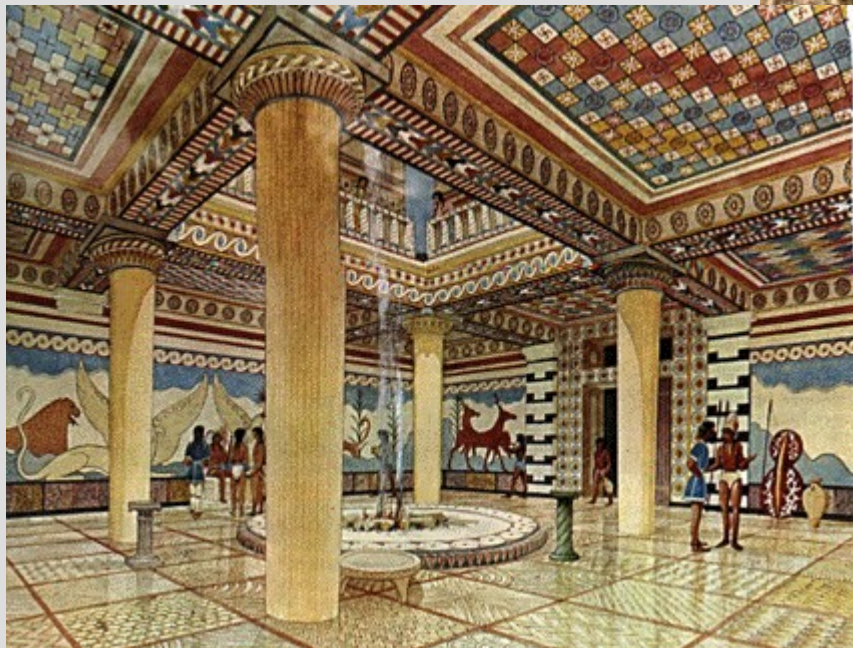
Trojan War

The most beautiful woman was Helen of Sparta, wife of the Greek king Menelaus. Paris kidnapped Helen to Troy. Menelaus asked all Achaeans for help. The expedition was commanded by Agamemnon, king of Argos and Mycenae, brother of Menelaus. Homer claims 1185 greek ships too part in expedition.

Citadel of Mycenae



Mycenae life



Trojan War - participants



Trojan War

War lasted ten years. The bravest warriors were Achilles and Hector.

Troy fell after Trojan Horse was used by Odysseus (łac. Ulysses)

„Achilles killing Hector” by Rubens
„Trojan Horse” by Tiepolo (XVIIIw)



Wojna Trojańska

Troy was destroyed by Greeks who desecrated the temples thus bringing upon them gods' wrath. Most of them never returned home.

Odysseus had to travel for 10 years before coming back to Ithaca, where his faithful wife awaited him.

„Kirke” by Wright Barker c. 1900

„Odyssey and Penelope” by Johann Tischbein XVIII/XIXw

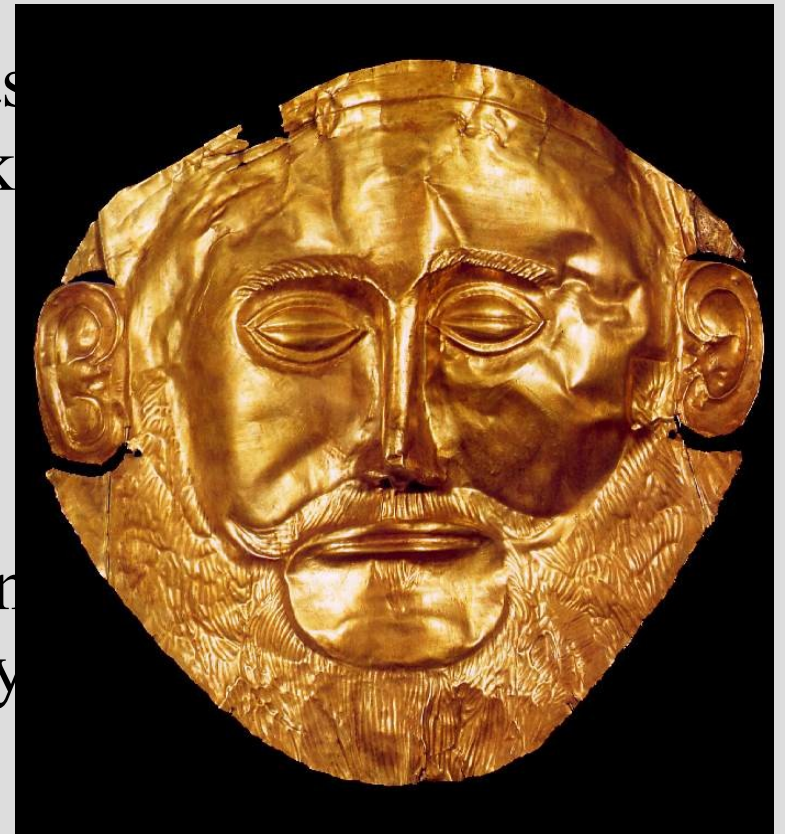


Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, 1751-1829: Odysseus und Penelope. Photo ©Maicar Förlag-GML

Trojan War – what we know or suppose?

It is dated c. 1270 or c. 1180 B.C. It was an economic war over control of Black Sea trade. It was fought by Achaeans and Assuwa confederation – tribes connected to Hettite empire.

The war was considered only a myth till late XIX c. when Heinrich Schliemann's excavations on Hisarlik Hill in Turkey proved city's existence.



Thank you for attention

