Earliest European civilization – Aegean civilization

- Minoan Crete
- Mycenaeae 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 Labirynth
- 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.
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
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.
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. Its 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 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
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 :)
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
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 consider 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