

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

Greece

Knossos.

- The Minoan civilization was an Aegean Bronze Age civilization that arose on the island of Crete and flourished from 2700 to 1450 BCE



Ruins of the palace at Knossos.

- The palace was abandoned at some unknown time at the end of the Late Bronze Age, c. 1380–1100 BCE



The North Portico of the palace in Knossos, Crete, with restored charging bull fresco.

- About 5 km north of the palace complex is the sea at the Port of Heraklion. Directly to the south is the Vlychia stream.



View to the south. The hill in the background is Gypsades. Between it and Knossos is the Vlychia.

- The South Entrance is on the left.



Pithoi, or storage jars, like these, stored wet and dry consumables, such as wine, oil and grain.

- The palace was built over a Neolithic (New Stone Age) town.



Restored murals.

- Throne from which the Throne Room was named, not the only throne at Knossos.
- The actual use of the room and the throne is unclear.



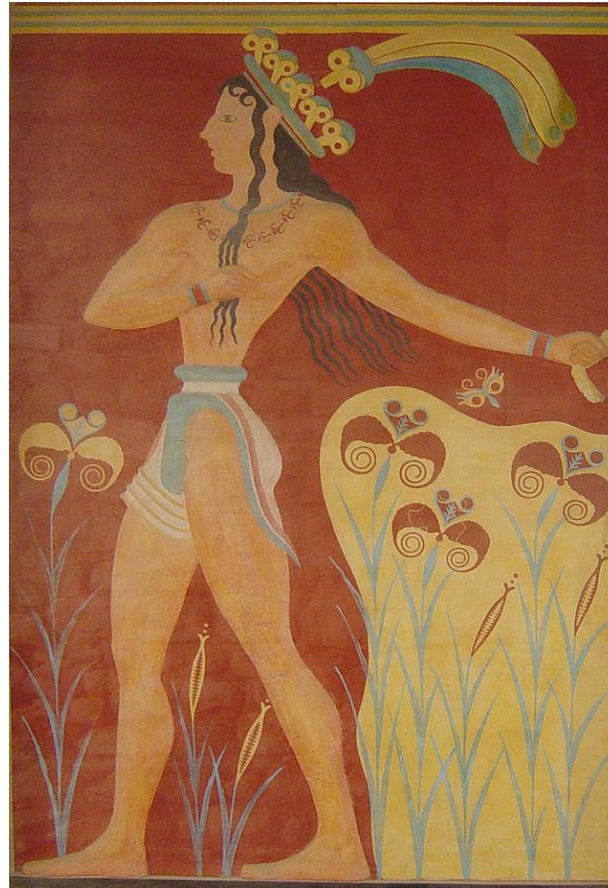
Mythical beast.

- Griffin couchant (lying down) facing throne



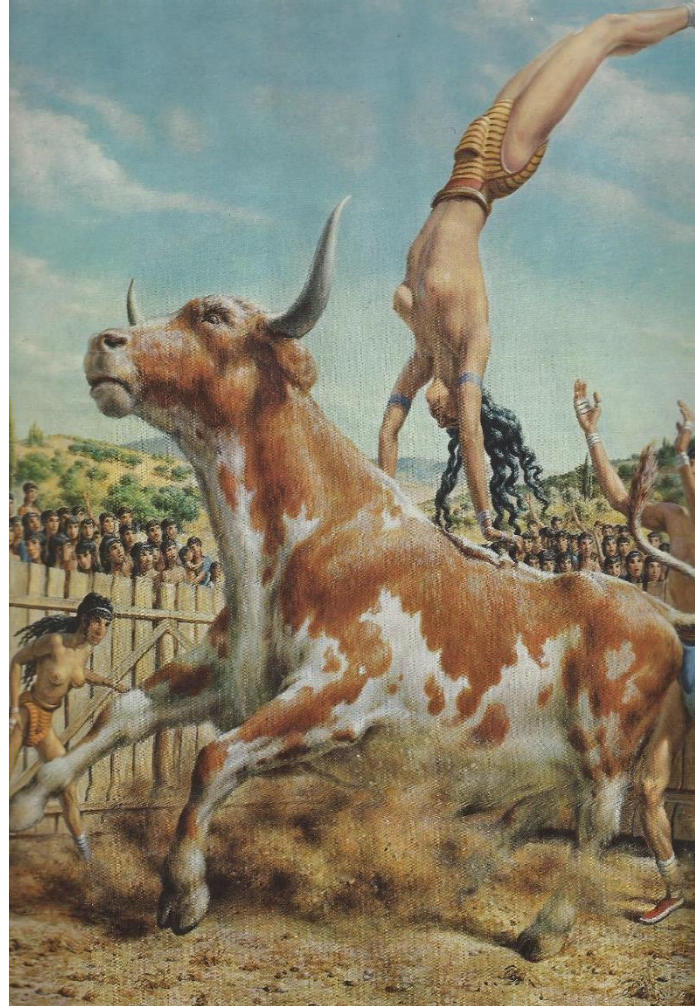
Restored ceremonial figure.

- "Prince of lilies" or "Priest-king Relief", plaster relief at the end of the Corridor of Processions, restored by Gilliéron.



A renowned Minoan athletic contest

Bull-leaping.



Myths associated with Knossos. 1

- Before he ascended the throne of Crete, Minos struggled with his brothers for the right to rule.
- Minos prayed to Poseidon to send him a snow-white bull, as a sign of approval by the gods for his reign.

Minos as the judge of shades in the afterlife.



Myths associated with Knossos. 2

- He promised to sacrifice the bull as an offering, and as a symbol of subservience.
- Poseidon in Kadriorg Palace, Tallinn(capital of Estonia).
- Poseidon (Greece) = Neptune (Rome)



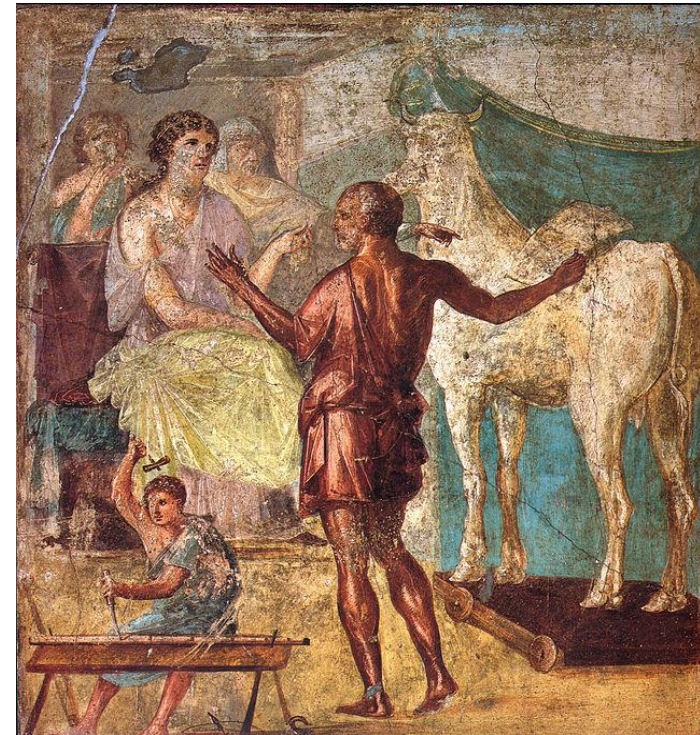
Deception.

- A beautiful white bull rose from the sea, but when Minos saw it, he coveted it for himself.
- He assumed that Poseidon would not mind, so he kept it and sacrificed the best specimen from his herd instead.



The creation of the minotaur. 1

- When Poseidon learned about the deceit, he made Pasiphaë, Minos' wife, fall madly in love with the bull.
- She had Daedalus, the famous architect, make a wooden cow for her.
- Daedalus presents the artificial cow to Pasiphaë: Roman fresco in the House of the Vettii, Pompeii.



The creation of the minotaur. 2

- Pasiphaë climbed into the decoy and fooled the white bull.
- The offspring of their lovemaking was a monster called the Minotaur.



The labyrinth on Crete.

- The creature had the head and tail of a bull on the body of a man.
- It caused such terror and destruction on Crete that Daedalus was summoned again, but this time by Minos himself.
- He ordered the architect to build a gigantic, intricate labyrinth (maze) from which escape would be impossible.



Human sacrifice.

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



Prince Theseus of Athens was the son of Aethra by two fathers: Aegeus and Poseidon

- The Greek hero Theseus 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.
- The Vatican Sleeping Ariadne, long called Cleopatra, a Roman marble in late Hellenistic taste



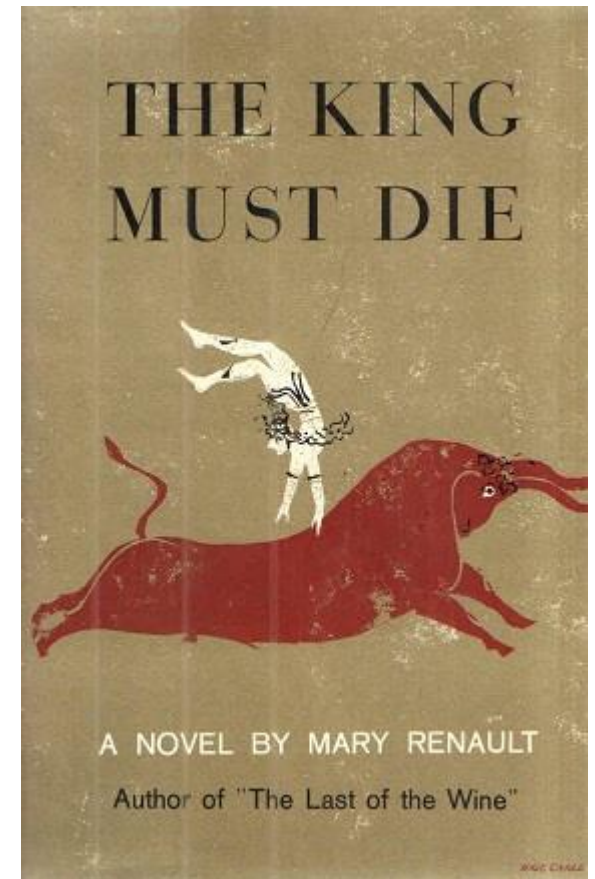
Theseus kills the minotaur.

- 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 slew it and led the others back to the entrance by following the thread.
- He and Ariadne fled from Crete, escaping her angry father.



English class for a Swiss International school.

- The King Must Die is a 1958 historical novel by Mary Renault that traces the early life and adventures of Theseus.
- Rather than retelling the myth, Renault constructs an archaeologically and anthropologically plausible story that might have developed into the myth.



A sad aftermath. 1

- When Theseus set out for Crete his ship had a black sail.
- He had agreed with his father that if he survived the contest, he would hoist a white sail.
- In the excitement of success Theseus forgot about the white sail.



Sad Aftermath. 2

- His father Aegeus, anxiously looking out from Cape Sounion, despaired when he saw a black sail on Theseus's ship, returning from Crete.
- This led him to believe that his son had been killed in his contest with the dreaded Minotaur.



Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion, from the East.

- In despair He threw himself into the sea which is now named after him: the Aegean Sea.



Back on Crete.

- Minos, enraged at the loss of his daughter, not to mention the killing of the Minotaur, shut Daedalus and his son Icarus inside the Labyrinth.
- Silver coin from Knossos representing the labyrinth, 400 BCE.



Legend of Daedalus and Icarus.

- Daedalus managed to get out of the Labyrinth - after all, he had built it and knew his way around.
- Daedalus decided that he and his son Icarus had to leave Crete and get away from Minos, before he brought them harm.
- However, Minos controlled the sea around Crete and there was no route of escape there.
- Daedalus realized that the only way out was by air.



Daedalus make wings.

- He tied feathers together, from smallest to largest so as to form an increasing surface.
- He secured the feathers at their midpoints with string and at their bases with wax.



Precautions.

- When both were prepared for flight, Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too high, because the heat of the sun would melt the wax, nor too low, because the sea foam would soak the feathers.



A fatal mistake.

- They had passed Samos, Delos and Lebynthos by the time the boy, forgetting himself, began to soar upward toward the sun.
- The blazing sun softened the wax which held the feathers together and they came off.
- Icarus quickly fell in the sea and drowned.



Icarian sea is between Cyclades (red) and Asia Minor(mauve).

- The Icarian Sea, (a subdivision of the Mediterranean Sea that lies between the Cyclades and Asia Minor) where Icarus fell, was named after him and it is said that Hercules, who passed by, gave him burial.
- Daedalus and then continued to Sicily, where he came to stay at the court of Cocalus in a place called Camicus.



Divider slide.



Mycenae Greece 1600 -1100 BCE

- Mycenae Greece, is located about 90 kilometres southwest of Athens, in the north-eastern Peloponnese.
- Argos is 11 kilometres to the south.



Ruins of the Mycenae citadel on the acropolis.

- Mycenae, a major centre and stronghold of Greek civilization, dominated much of southern Greece.
- At its peak in 1350 BCE, the citadel and lower town had a population of 30,000 and an area of 32 hectares.



Ruins of Mycenae.

- View from the citadel acropolis, or high city.



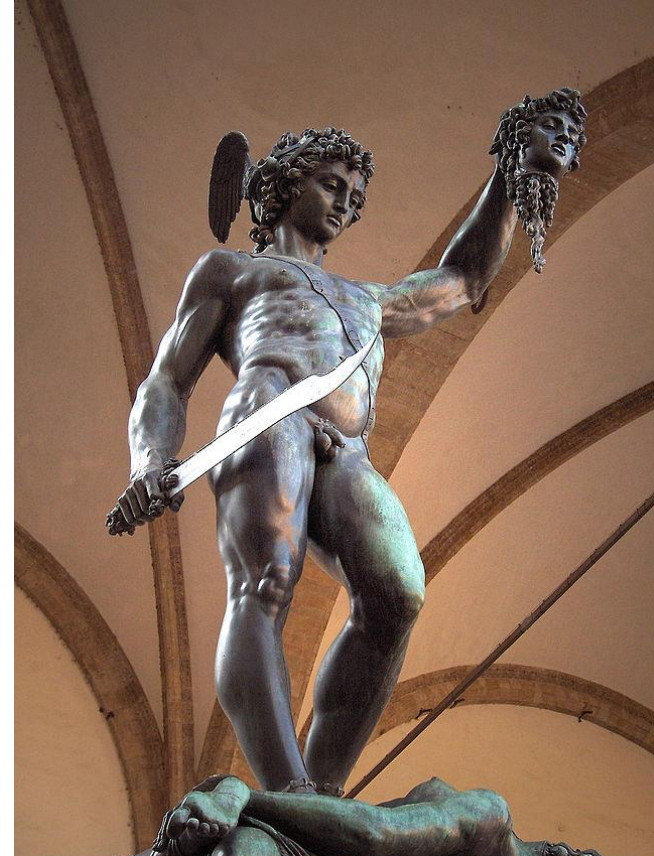
The Palace at Mycenae: The Lion gate.

- According to Greek legend the palace was the home of the Atreid dynasty founded by Perseus, son of Zeus.



The Myth of Perseus.

- Perseus beheaded the Gorgon Medusa, and saved Andromeda from the sea monster Cetus(the Kraken).
- Perseus was the son of the mortal Danae and the god Zeus.
- Perseus by Benvenuto Cellini, Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence, Italy.



Uncertainty of significance.

- The Lion Gate (detail); two headless lionesses flank the central column, whose significance is much debated.



The kings were buried in style.

- The Lion Tholos Tomb(beehive shaped tomb) at Mycenae.
Note stomion(deep doorway) of large blocks of conglomerate and dromos(unroofed passage, crumbled now) while the chamber(tholos) itself is made of smaller stones.



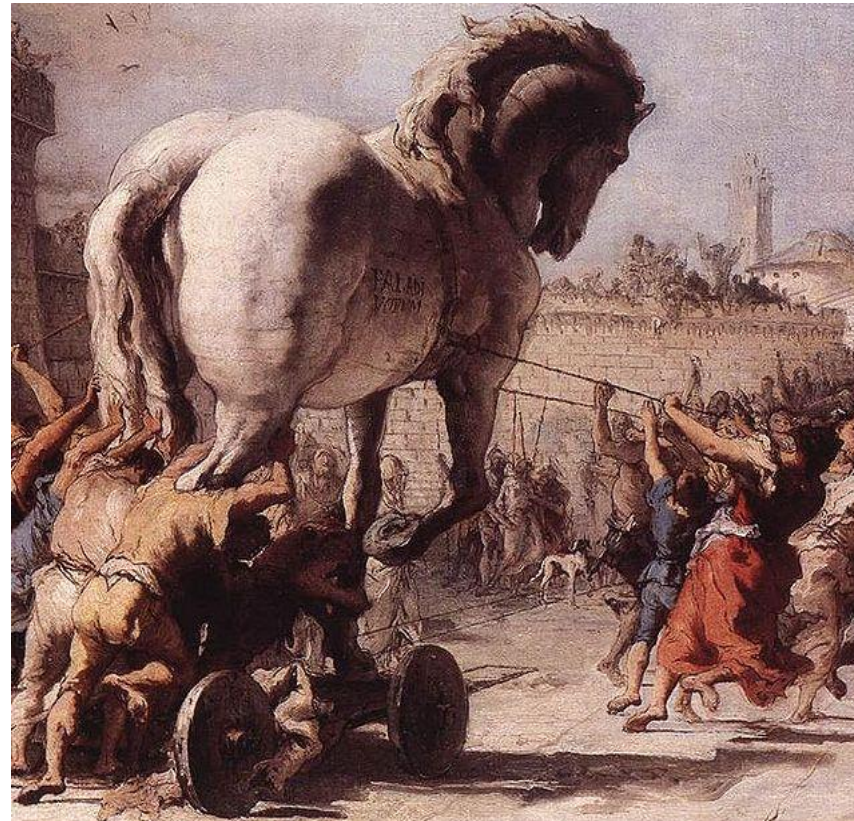
Funeral Mask of Agamemnon crafted in gold.

- The Mask of Agamemnon discovered at Mycenae in 1876 by Heinrich Schliemann.
- It was found over the face of a body located in a burial shaft, designated Grave V, at the site "Grave Circle A, Mycenae".
- Hole near the ear for twine to hold the mask in place over the corpse's face.



Agamemnon was supreme commander of the Greek force that destroyed Troy.

- Helen of Troy was married to Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus when she ran off with Prince Paris of Troy, thus causing the Trojan war.



Treasury of Atreus or Tomb of Agamemnon.

- A long dromos.



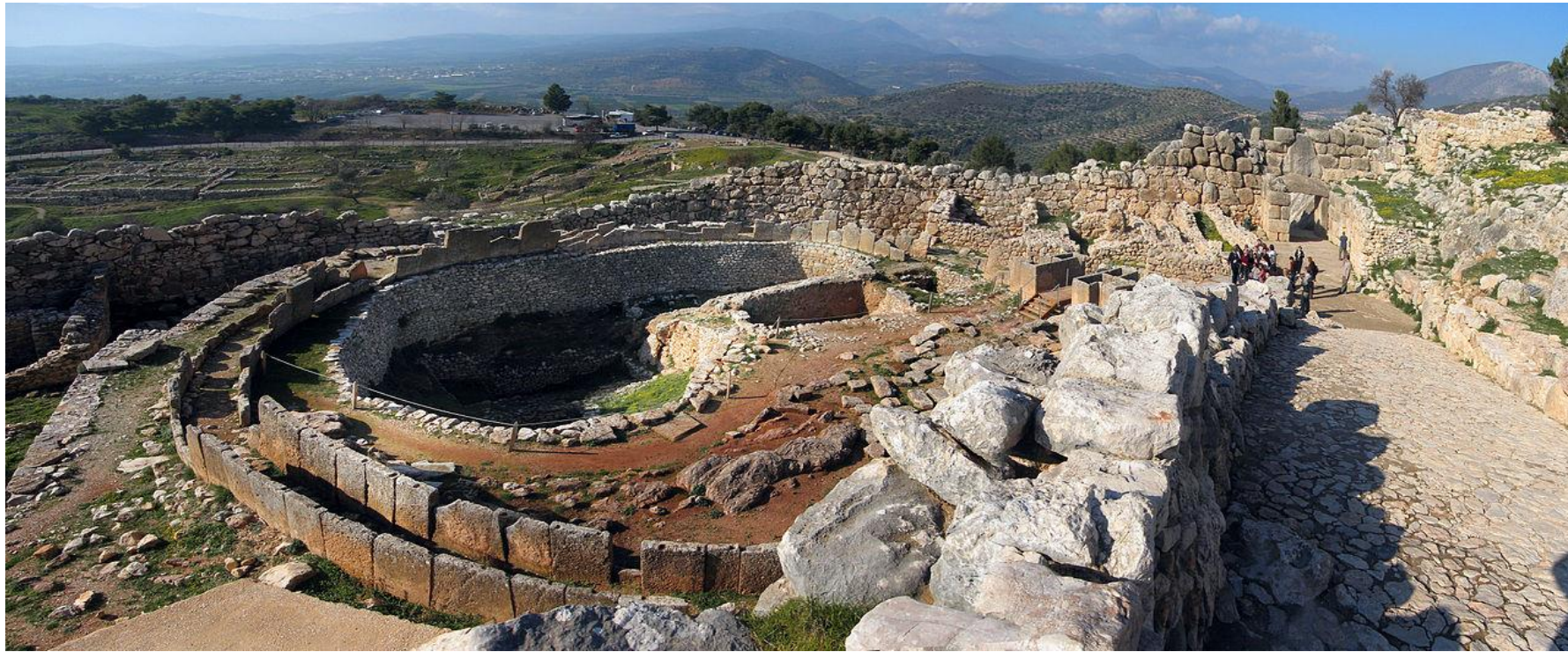
There are two circles of tombs at the site.

- There are nine tombs.
- The tomb on the last slide, from a distance.



The Grave Circle A, and the main entrance of the citadel at Mycenae.

- This circle is inside the citadel. Circle B is outside.



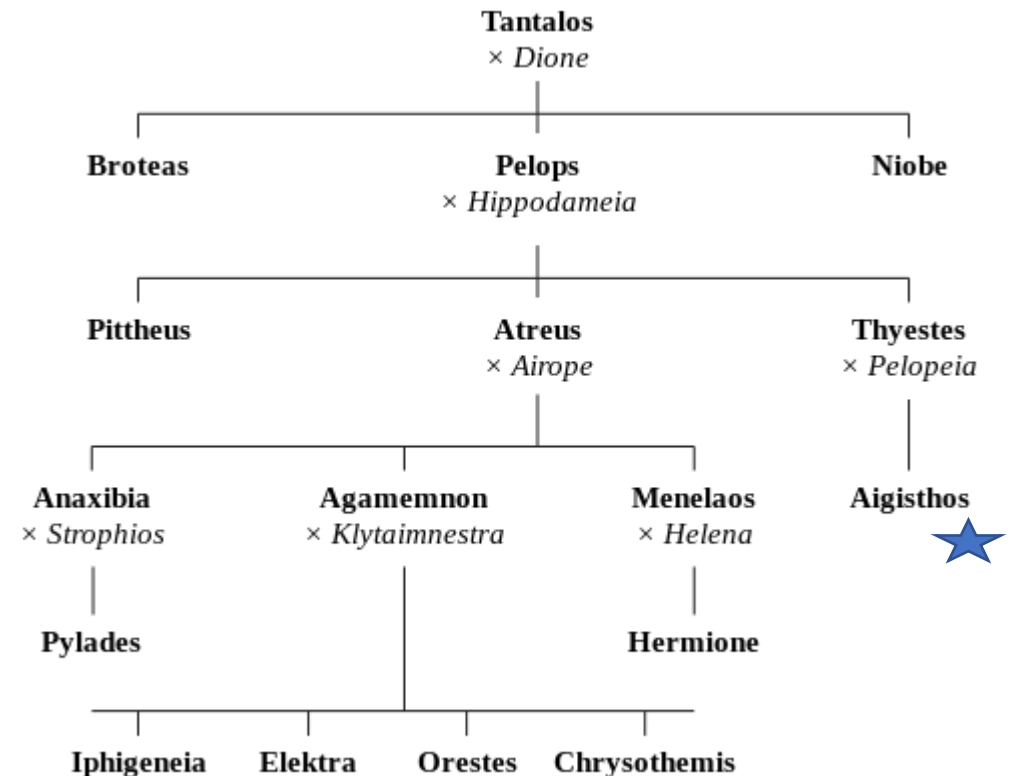
Tomb of Aegisthus

- The top of the tholos has collapsed and the interior of the tomb is seen in this picture.
- The walls of Mycenae are visible in the background.



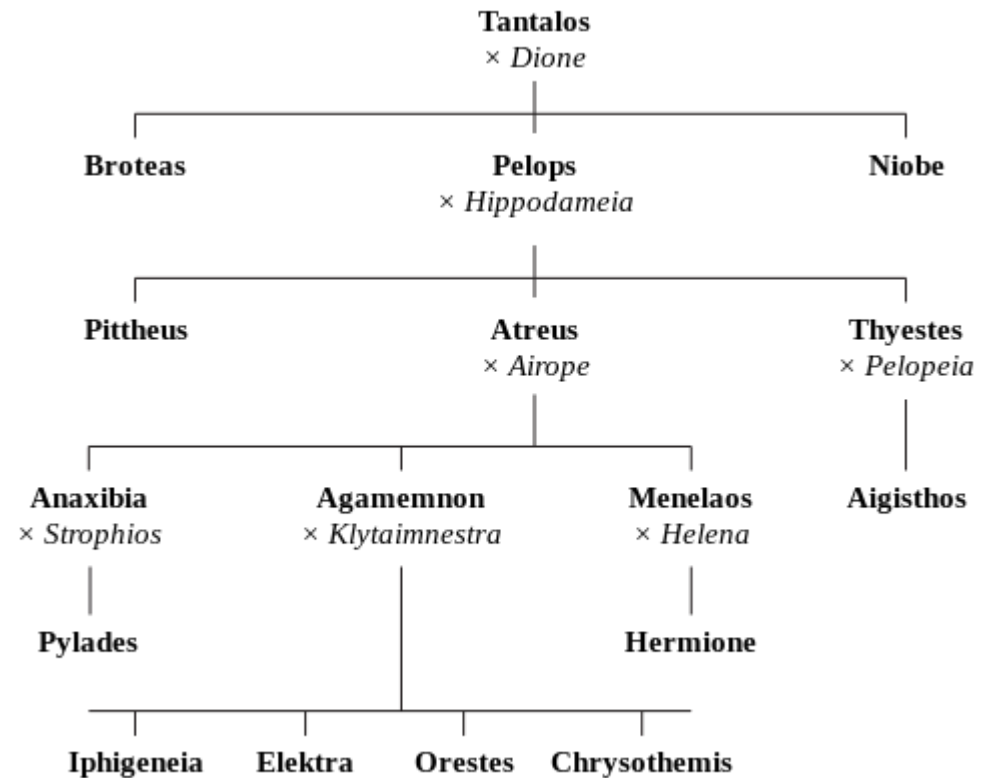
Born of an incestuous union.

- In Greek mythology, Aegisthus was the son of Thyestes and his daughter, Pelopeia.
- Thyestes and his twin brother Atreus fought over the Mycenae throne.
- Thyestes had an affair with Atreus' wife, Aerope.
- Atreus killed Thyestes' sons and served them to him disguised as animal meat.



Revenge.

- After eating his own sons' corpses, Thyestes asked an oracle how best to gain revenge.
- The advice was to father a son with his own daughter, Pelopia, and that son would kill Atreus.
- Thyestes, hiding his identity from her, raped Pelopia after she performed a sacrifice.
- However, Pelopia stole his sword, which she recognised.



Aegisthus' uncle adopts him.

- When Aegisthus was born, his mother, ashamed of his origin, abandoned him and he was raised by shepherds and suckled by a goat, hence his name Aegisthus (“from a buck”).
- Atreus, not knowing the baby's origin, took Aegisthus in and raised him as his own son.
- Pelopia later gave her father (Thyestes’) sword to Aegisthus.

A set of swords (right), Grave V.



Treachery.

- Atreus sent Aegisthus to kill Thyestes, but Aegisthus carried Thyestes' sword and Thyestes recognised it.
- Father Thyestes and son Aegisthus were thus reconciled and later Aegisthus slew Atreus, while he was offering a sacrifice on the seacoast.
- Bull's head (right), Grave IV.



Helen and Menelaus. 2

- Aegisthus and his father now took possession of the throne of Mycenae from which they had been usurped by Atreus.
- Aegisthus and Thyestes then ruled over Mycenae jointly, exiling Atreus' sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus to Sparta, where King Tyndareus gave his daughters, Clytemnestra and Helen, respectively, to them as wives.



Helen and Menelaus. 1

- Menelaus intends to strike Helen; but captivated by her beauty, he drops his sword.
- Eros and Aphrodite are onlookers.



Helen and Menelaus. 2

- Helen fled from Menelaus, with Prince Paris of Troy.
- Agamemnon led a force of Greek heroes who sacked Troy.

“Beware of Greeks bearing gifts”.
(Roman poet Virgil, via the character Laocoön in the *Aeneid*.)



No whodunnit, just a how-dunnit.

- While Agamemnon, was absent on his expedition against Troy, to 'rescue' Helen, Aegisthus seduced Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra.
- In order not to be surprised by the return of Agamemnon, Aegisthus sent out spies, and when Agamemnon came, Aegisthus invited him to a feast at which he had him treacherously murdered.
- The Funeral Procession of Agamemnon.



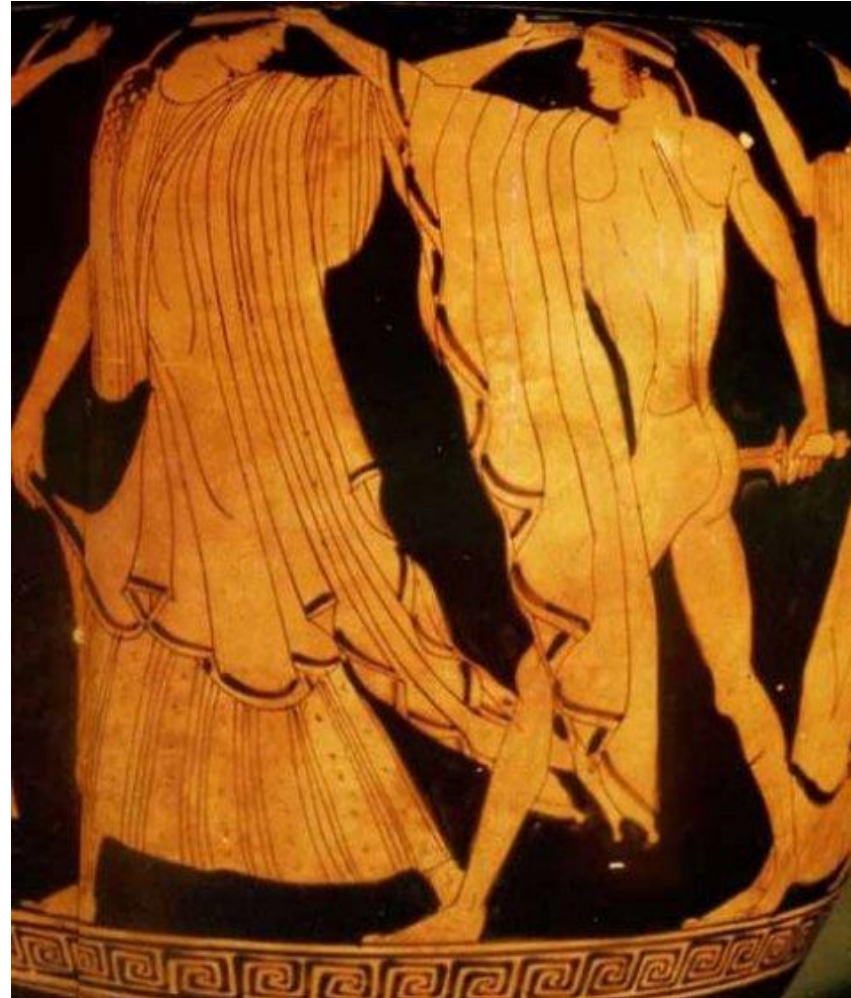
Aegisthus being slain by Orestes – The Louvre.

After this event Aegisthus reigned a further seven years over Mycenae, until, in the eighth, Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, returned home and avenged the death of his father by putting the Aegisthus to death.



Orestes slaying Aegisthus.

- Another version.



Divider slide.



Remains of a lavish lifestyle.

- Ruins of the Palace of Palatitsia, Aigai, ancient Macedonia, at modern Vergina.
- The palace served ancient Macedonian kings as a summer residence.



Ancient Aigai, at Vergina near modern Thessaloniki.



Mound in Vergina concealing ancient tombs dating from 550BCE. It is called a tumulus.



Restored entrance to the underground tombs

- Some of the tombs were ransacked before their modern re-discovery.



Tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great.

- There is some dispute about the identification of the tomb.



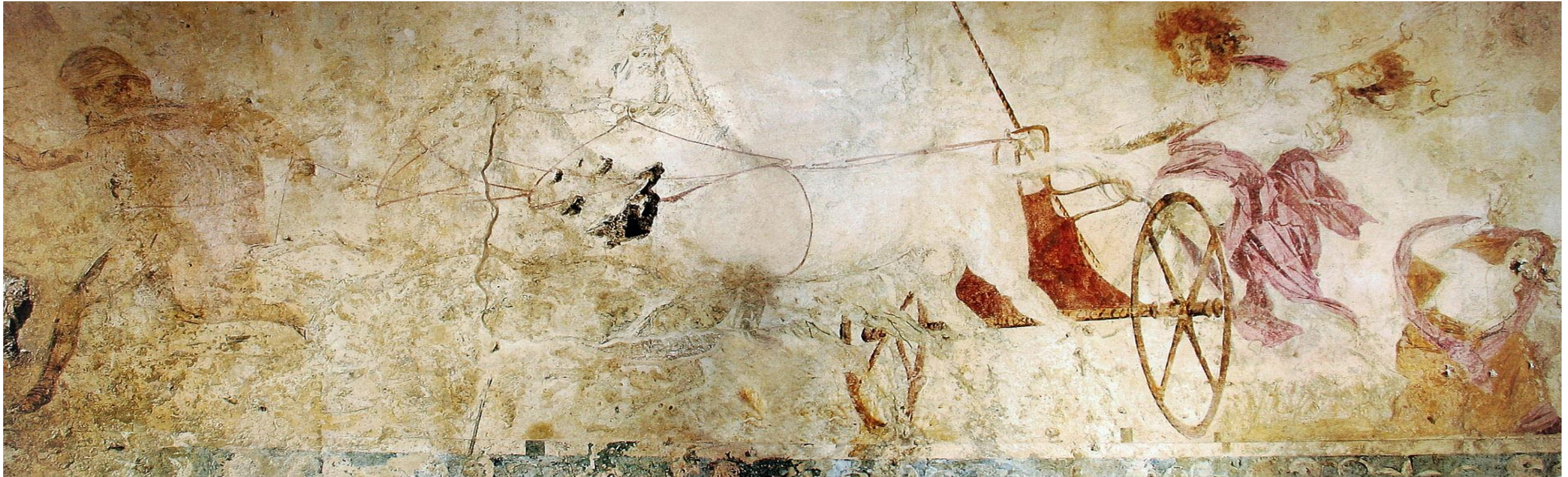
The golden larnax and the golden grave crown of Philip.

- The ashes or remains of the king are kept in the small golden coffin, which is called a larnax.



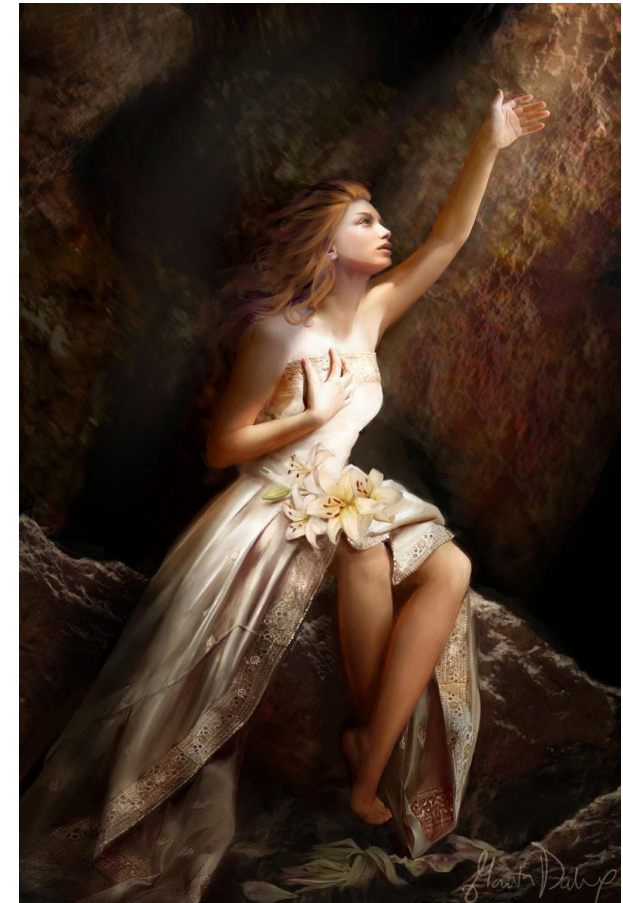
One of the tombs has a fresco.

- It illustrates the ancient myth of Hades abducting Persephone.



The myth of Persephone.

- In Greek mythology, Persephone is the daughter of Zeus (head of the gods), and the harvest goddess Demeter.
- She becomes queen of the underworld after being abducted by Hades, the god-king of the underworld.
- Homer describes her as the formidable, venerable majestic queen of the underworld, who carries into effect the curses of men upon the souls of the dead.



Persephone opening a cista (box) containing the infant Adonis, on a pinax (tablet) from Locri, Italy.

- Goddess of the Underworld, springtime, vegetation, and maidenhood.



The tomb of Alexander IV of Macedon son of Alexander the Great.

- It contains a fresco of a chariot race.

