

THE MYCENAEANS

From about 1600BC, mainland Greece was dominated by a people we call the Mycenaeans. They are named after the city of Mycenae, where evidence of their culture was first discovered.

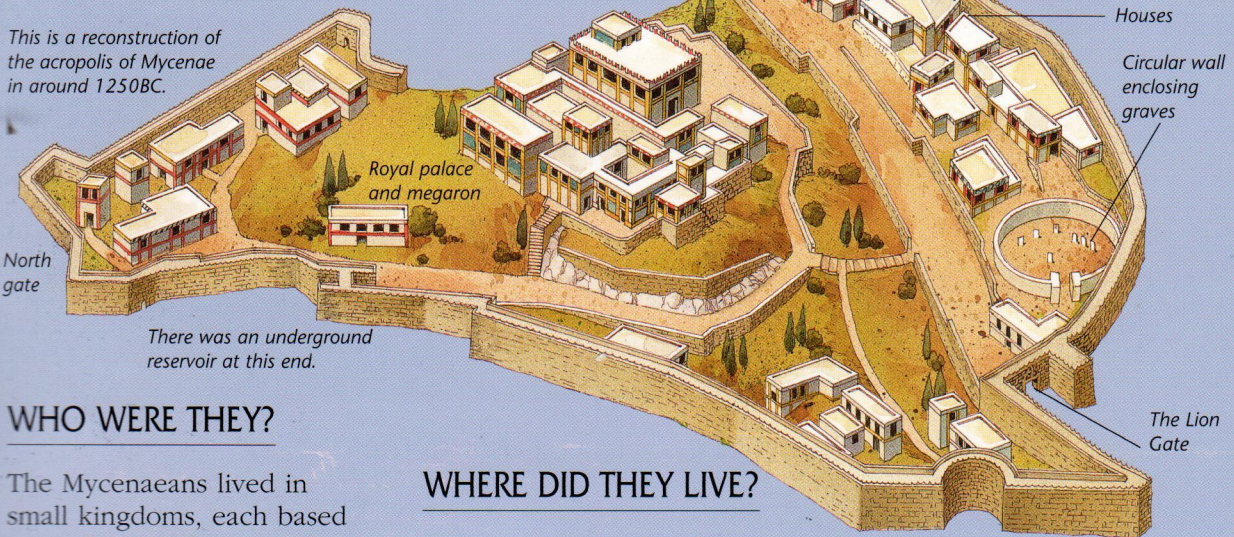


INTERNET LINK

For a link to a website where you can take a virtual tour of Mycenae, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com



Map of Mycenaean cities



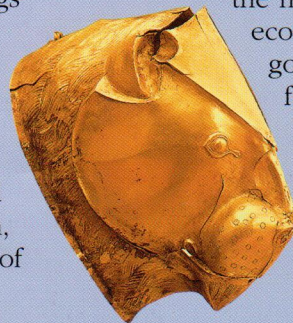
WHO WERE THEY?

The Mycenaeans lived in small kingdoms, each based around a separate city. These kingdoms were never united, but they traded together and shared a language and way of life. Mycenae itself was probably the leading city.

Historians are not sure where the Mycenaeans came from. They may have come to Greece from central Europe around 2000BC, or they may have already been in Greece for some time before that.

WHERE DID THEY LIVE?

Most Mycenaeans lived in walled cities which were built on high ground, to make them easy to defend. The important buildings were situated in the *acropolis* (meaning "high city" in Greek) on top of the hill. Most people lived in the lower town, outside the walls of the acropolis.



A gold pot, called a rhyton, shaped like an animal's head

THE ACROPOLIS

The acropolis at Mycenae was similar to those of other ancient cities. Inside the walls was the royal palace and houses for courtiers, soldiers and craftsmen. The main gateway was decorated with two lions, possibly symbols of the royal family.

FOOD AND TRADE

As in Crete, the palace was at the heart of the island's economic life. Craftsmen's goods and produce from farming were stored in the acropolis, for distribution around Crete, or export.