

computer model of the palace at Knossos.

<http://www.lfc.edu/academics/greece/KnosTour.html> -- A quick tour of Minos' palace at Knossos. Well illustrated; includes a floor plan.

<http://www.lfc.edu/academics/greece/BrzMin.html> -- A good summary of Minoan civilization.

<http://www.culture.gr/2/21/211/21123n/e211wn01.html> -- From the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, a site on the palace at Knossos.

<http://www.culture.gr/2/21/211/21123a/e211wa07.html> -- The Hellenic Ministry of Culture's page on the ruins at Phaistos. Contains links to other Minoan sites.

<http://www.greekciv.pdx.edu/others/atlantis/minoans.htm> -- From Portland State University, a site on the Minoans designed for middle schoolers.

**Other Resources:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**FOR STUDENTS:**

**Baumann, Hans.** *Lion Gate and Labyrinth.* Pantheon Books, 1967.

**Caselli, Giovanni.** *In Search of Knossos: The Quest for the Minotaur's Labyrinth.* Peter Bedrick Books, 1999.

**Fisher, Leonard Everett.** *Theseus and the Minotaur.* Holiday House, 1992.

**Hutton, Warwick.** *Theseus and the Minotaur.* M.K. McElderry Books, 1989.

**Robinson, Charles Alexander.** *The First Book of Ancient Crete and Mycenae.* F. Watts, 1964.

**Ventura, Piero.** *In Search of Ancient Crete.* Silver Burdett, 1985.

**FOR ADULTS:**

**Castelden, Rodney.** *Minoans: Life in Bronze Age Crete.* Routledge, 1993.

**Cotterell, Arthur.** *The Minoan World.* Scribner, 1980.

**Cottrell, Leonard.** *The Bull of Minos: The Discoveries of Schliemann and Evans.* Facts on File, 1984.

**Farnaux, Alexandre.** *Knossos: Searching for the Legendary Palace of King Minos.* Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

**Higgins, Reynold.** *Minoan and Mycenaean Art.* Thames and Hudson, 1997.

**Horwitz, Sylvia L.** *The Find of a Lifetime: Sir Arthur Evans and the Discovery of Knossos.* Viking Press, 1981.

**Myers, J. Wilson, et al.** *Aerial Atlas of Ancient Crete.* Univ. of California Press, 1992.

**Willets, R.F.** *Everyday Life in Ancient Crete.* Putnam, 1969.

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## THE LEGACY OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

# THE MINOANS

## LEGACY OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

### THE MINOANS

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Take a journey to a land where history and myth are mysteriously intertwined. The peaceful Minoans ruled the sea, controlling trade routes, amassing wealth, and creating a land of abundance, art, and sport centered upon a great palace. This stupendous structure was so intimidating to those who came later that it gave birth to one of antiquity's strangest legends -- a bewildering maze that held deep in its center the human-devouring monster known as the Minotaur.

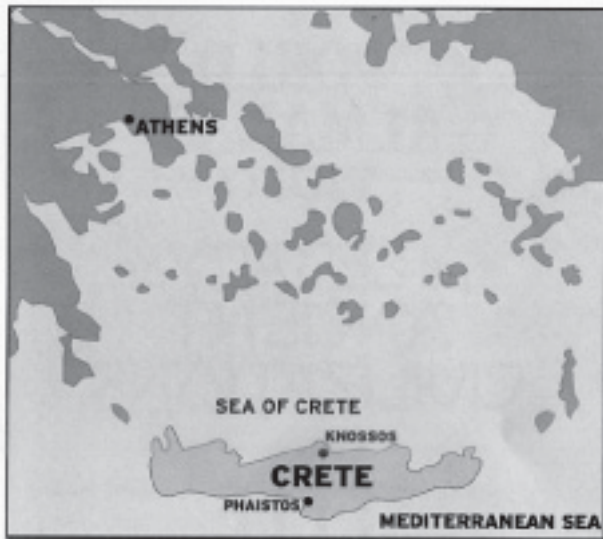


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After studying the map and reading about the Minoans, read the sections on vocabulary and important people, places, and dates to provide a focus while viewing the program. After viewing the program, review the sections listed and consider the Things To Think About. Research topics further using the Internet and other resources provided.

### **The Minoans in Their Time:**

One of the most powerful myths handed down by the ancient Greeks tells of the fabled King Minos, who ordered the construction of a vast, mazelike building called the labyrinth. Within this structure, he imprisoned the monster known as the Minotaur, a creature with the head of a bull and the body of a man that was fed on human sacrifice. For centuries this tale remained no more than legend. And then in the 1890s an archaeologist named Arthur Evans began uncovering, on the island of Crete, the remains of a civilization that flourished between 2500 and 1350 BC. To Evans' surprise, he found the ruins of a great palace with hundreds of interconnected rooms and hallways -- a building so complex that it could easily have impressed visitors as having been as bewildering as a maze. Not only that, the sacred animal of the people who lived there was a bull! Evans called these people "Minoans," after the legendary monarch, and today, thanks to the studies of Evans and others, we know a great deal about them. For centuries, the Minoans had a thriving maritime trade

as their ships controlled the sea lanes between Greece, Syria, and Egypt. Their crafts workers were experts in pottery, ivory, metal, and gemstones; their artists painted colorful frescoes; and their architects built great palaces, such as the one discovered by Evans at Knossos. The Minoan civilization disappeared rather suddenly for reasons that are still unclear. Some experts believe they may have been the victims of a gigantic tidal wave that was unleashed by the explosion of a volcano on an island nearby.

### **Vocabulary:**

**griffin** -- Mythical animal with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. Depicted in Minoan frescoes.

**Kamares** -- Type of Minoan pottery; named after the cave in which it was discovered.

**labyrinth** -- a maze; usually one that people can walk through.

**Linear Script A** -- One of the forms of writing developed by the Minoans. It has not yet been deciphered (another script found on Crete, Linear B, was deciphered in the 1950's; it turned out to be the oldest known form of Greek.)

**Minotaur** -- legendary monster, half-man and half-bull, said to be confined in the labyrinth at Knossos.

**Mount Iouctas** -- Mountain near Knossos and source of the city's fresh water.

**Parisienne, La** -- Name given to a woman depicted on a Minoan fresco; so-called because of her resemblance to a Parisian woman of the 19th century.

**Phaistos disk** -- Minoan disk containing undeciphered characters created by an ancient form of writing.

**pithoi** -- Large decorated jars used by the Minoans for storage.

**Zeus** -- Mythological king of the Greek gods and goddesses; said to have been born and raised on Crete.

### **Important People:**

**Evans, Sir Arthur** -- British archaeologist who spent nearly 40 years conducting excavations in Crete.

**Minos** -- Legendary king of Crete and ruler of the Minoans.

### **Important Places:**

**Aegean Sea** -- Arm of the Mediterranean Sea off southeast Europe between Greece and Turkey.

**Crete** -- At the southern limit of the Aegean Sea, the largest of the Greek islands.

**Hagia Triada** -- Minoan city and archaeological site where a coffin depicting Minoan religious processions was discovered.

**Knossos** -- Ancient city on Crete; important archaeological site and legendary capital of King Minos and location of the labyrinth.

**Phaistos** -- Site of a Minoan palace-city complex on Crete.

### **Important Dates:**

**c. 6000 BC** -- Arrival of immigrants on the island of Crete

**c. 2500 BC** -- Beginning of Minoan culture

**c. 2100 BC** -- First appearance of large, complex palaces on Crete

**c. 1700 BC** -- Crete is devastated by a catastrophic earthquake and fire.

**c. 1700 - 1450 BC** -- An era known as the "Period of the Later Palaces," a time in which the Minoan palaces were rebuilt.

**c. 1350 BC** -- Collapse of Minoan civilization.

**1900** -- Arthur Evans discovers the remains of the palace at Knossos

**1935** -- Evans leaves Crete at age 84

### **Things To Think About:**

- What does the archaeological evidence tell us about the status of women in Minoan society? How do their hair styles compare to what might be seen today?
- Investigate the career of Sir Arthur Evans. How did he become interested in Crete and what obstacles did he have to overcome to conduct his excavations?
- Research the history and types of labyrinths and mazes. Try drawing one of your own.
- The archaeological evidence suggests that music played a significant role in Minoan culture. Based on what you know about the Minoans, what do you think their songs were about? Just for fun, try creating a "Top Ten" list of possible Minoan song titles.
- Why was the island of Crete subject to earthquakes and volcanic disaster? Find a map of earthquake zones and locate Crete on it.
- Two animals represented in Minoan art are the dolphin and the bull. What symbolic importance did the Minoans give these creatures?
- Did the Minoans emphasize or downplay military power? What factors would have affected their policy?

### **Internet Resources:**

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/%7Edee/MINOA/MINOANS.HTM> -- From Washington State University, a site rich in information on the Minoans, with sections on such topics as women, visual culture, bull-jumping, and more.

[http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Palace\\_at\\_Knossos.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Palace_at_Knossos.html) -- Photographs, plans and 3D