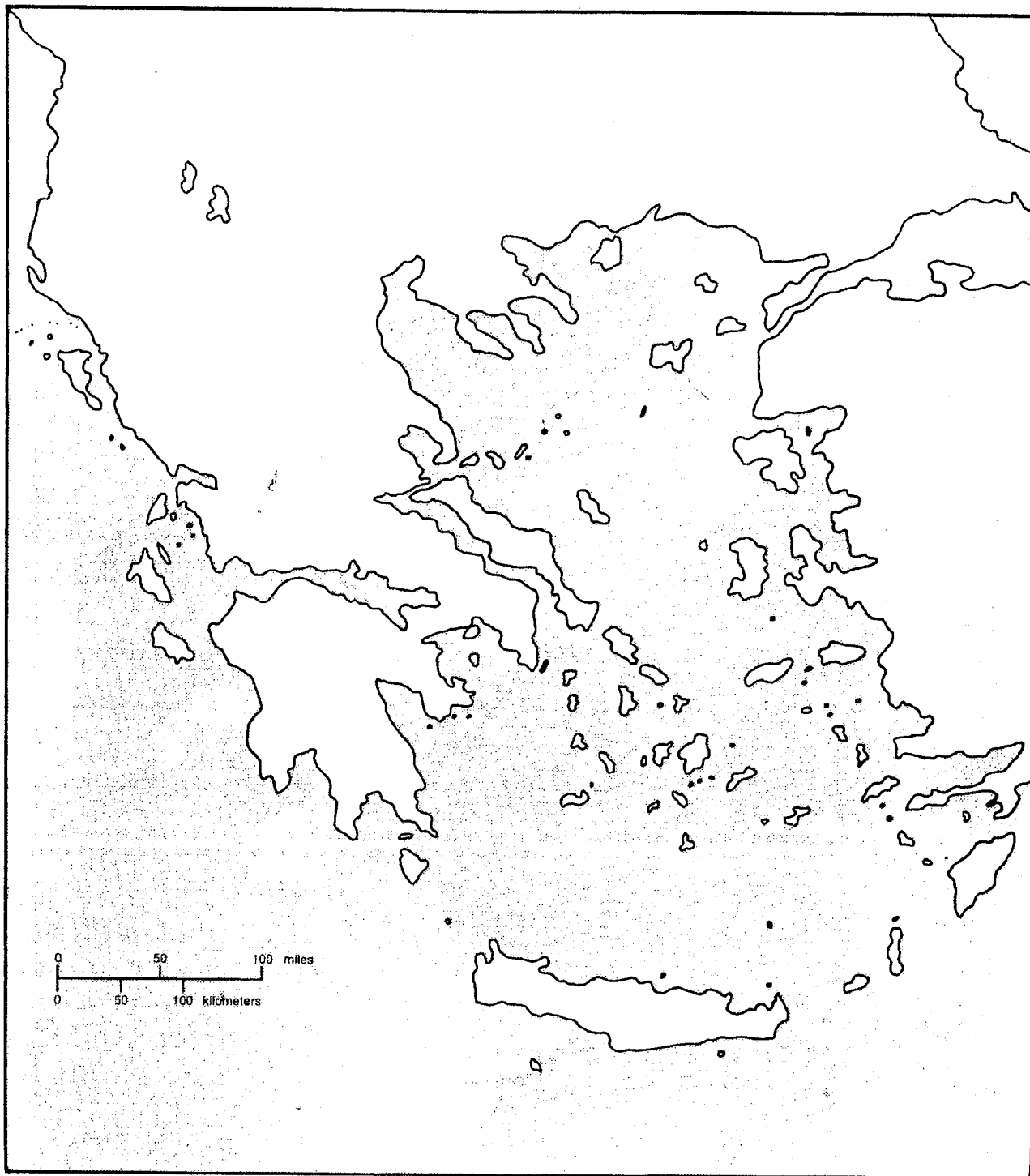


# GREECE AND THE AEGEAN WORLD



Using the map on page 100 of your text, label the following:

**Regions:**

Thrace  
Macedonia  
Thessaly  
Ionia  
Crete  
Peloponnesian Peninsula

**Seas:**

Black Sea  
Aegean Sea  
Ionian Sea  
Sea of Crete  
Mediterranean Sea  
Adriatic Sea

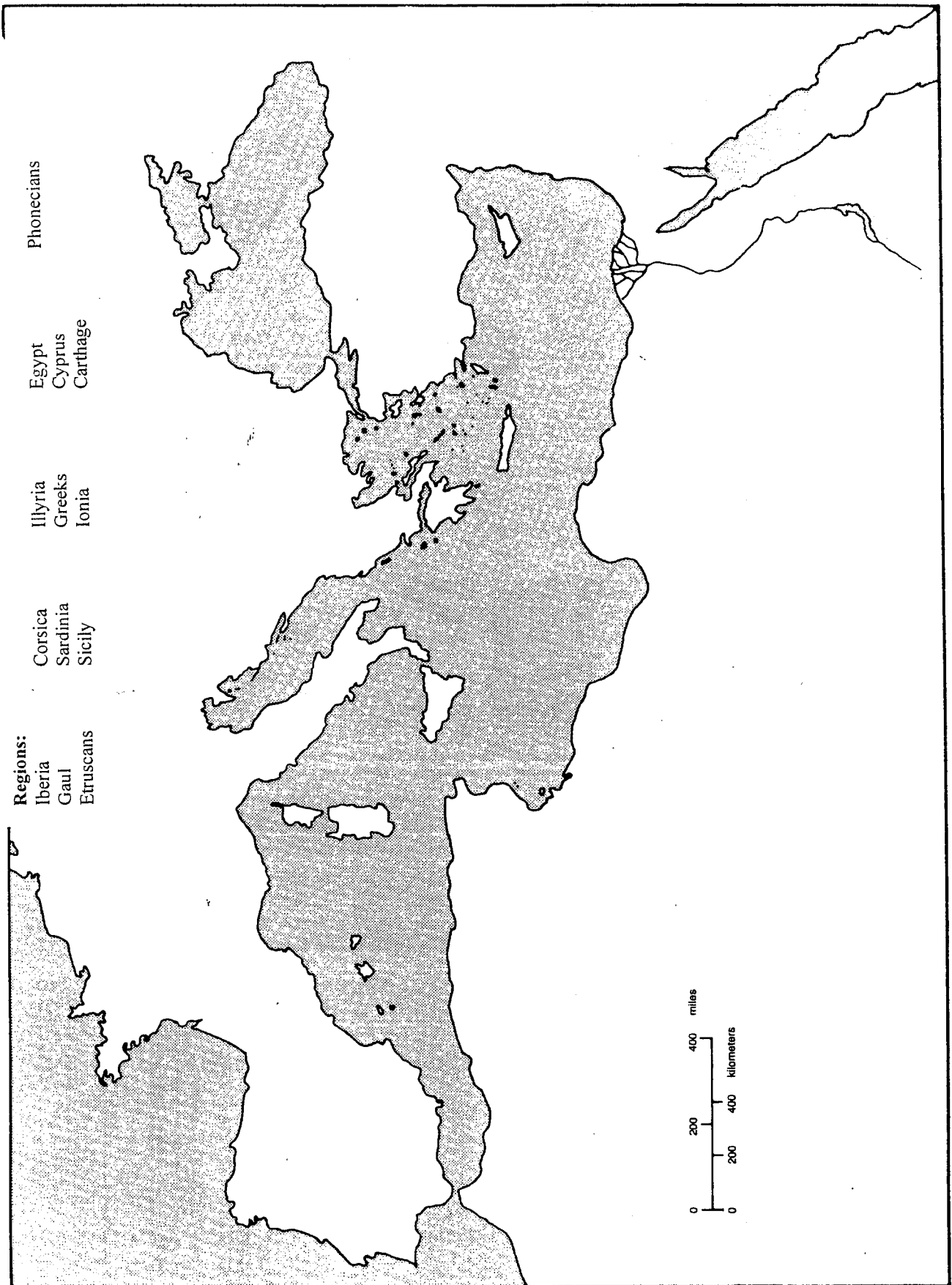
**Locations:**

Mt. Olympus  
Thermopylae  
Athens  
Corinth  
Mycenae  
Salamis

Sparta  
Delphi  
Troy  
Knossos

# MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

Using the map on page 112 of your text, mark the areas of Greek and Phoenician colonization. Greek city states were established far away from the homeland. Why were so many Greeks willing to take their chances in new territories?  
Why do you think most of the Greek colonies were settled in coastal areas?



## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Bronze Age Greece 1 – The Minoans

100 years ago the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans conducted the first extensive archaeological excavation of Knossos on the island of Crete and uncovered evidence of Europe's oldest civilised community. He called the civilisation 'Minoan', after a legendary Cretan king called Minos.



Minoan civilisation lasted from approximately 2700 to 1450 B.C. This period was during the Aegean Bronze Age. Bronze Age is regarded as the second part of a three-age system for prehistoric societies. (Stone Age comes before and Iron Age after). People had learned to mix copper with a little tin to make a metal called bronze. Sharper and stronger tools could be made with bronze. This made farming and building easier and better than ever before.

The farmers in Crete soon began to produce much more food than they needed for themselves. This meant that they could exchange surplus food for other things produced by other

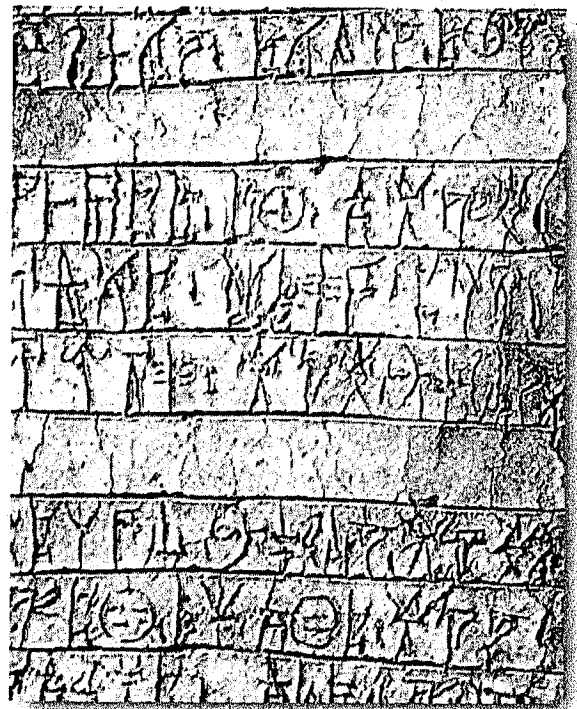
people. There was no need now for everyone to produce food for a living. Some people began to work as craftsmen or builders or artists. Trade developed with other lands. Towns and palaces were built and fine arts and crafts were produced.

#### Written Language

The Minoans were the first 'historical' people of Europe because they developed a form of writing. This system is known as Linear A because the symbols consist of lines rather than pictures. Linear A was written on clay tablets which were then left in the Sun to dry. They were reusable - adding water would soften the clay allowing the tablet to be erased. Luckily for us, some tablets were in buildings which burnt down. The fire hardened the tablets so that they survived, although we don't know what they mean.

#### The People and the Evidence

Since organic evidence has generally decomposed over time, the most important surviving Minoan art is in ceramics (pottery), architecture with frescos (paintings on plaster) that include landscapes, and stone carvings. We know from ancient wall paintings how the Minoans dressed. The men seem to have



worn short kilts which were probably made of wool or linen. Women dressed more elaborately in brightly-coloured long dresses with tight tops (perhaps the first fitted garments in history) or they were open to the navel allowing their breasts to be left exposed, perhaps during ceremonial occasions (see below). It must be remembered that other forms of dress may have been worn of which we have no record.



Fresco from Knossos palace

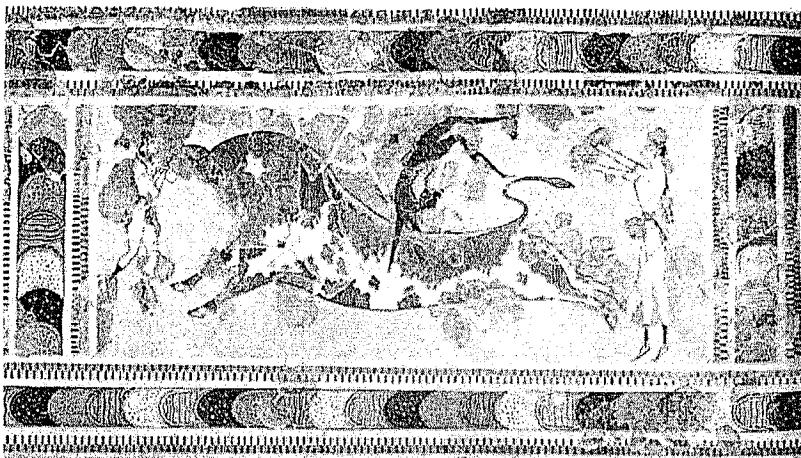
### Minoan Religion

The Minoans seem to have been a very religious people. They believed in several Gods and Goddesses (female Gods) and the Goddesses appear to have been the more important. There were priests and priestesses to carry out sacred ceremonies. There were sacred symbols which the people regarded as important.

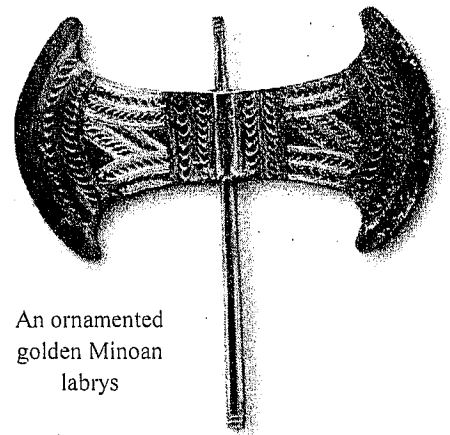
One such symbol was the double-headed axe or 'labrys'. (below) Another was the image of a bull's horns. The bull was a sacred animal to the Minoans.

One amazing Minoan activity was bull-leaping. This appears to have been a mixture of a very dangerous sport and a religious ceremony.

Young men and women would grasp the horns of a bull as it charged towards them. They would then leap over the head of the bull, on to its back and then on to the ground.



A fresco found at the Minoan site of Knossos



An ornated golden Minoan labrys

### Activities

1. Stick the 'Three Age System' diagram into your notes and explain what is meant by the 'Bronze Age'.
2. Why was efficient farming important to the development of Minoan civilisation?
3. Why have so few sources of information about Minoan civilisation survived?
4. Identify three things that we can learn about Minoan civilisation from the surviving art?
5. Is the fresco from Knossos palace reliable evidence about what Minoan women looked like?
6. What evidence is there that women played an important role in Minoan society?

**Year 3 – Human Science**  
**The Three Age System of Prehistory**

Age	Period	Tools	Economy	Habitation	Society	Religion
<u>Stone Age</u>	<u>Palaeolithic</u>	Handmade tools and objects found in nature – <u>cudgel</u> , <u>club</u> , <u>sharpened stone</u> , <u>chopper</u> , <u>handaxe</u> , <u>scraper</u> , <u>spear</u> , <u>harpoon</u> , <u>needle</u> .	<u>Hunting and gathering</u>	Mobile lifestyle – <u>caves</u> , <u>huts</u> or <u>skin hovels</u> , mostly by <u>rivers</u> and <u>lakes</u>	A <u>band</u> of edible-plant gatherers and hunters (25–100 people)	Evidence for belief in the afterlife first appears in the <u>Upper Palaeolithic</u> , marked by the appearance of burial rituals and <u>ancestor worship</u> .  Priests appear in the <u>prehistory</u> .
	<u>Mesolithic</u>	Handmade tools and objects found in nature – <u>bow</u> and <u>arrow</u> , <u>fish</u> – <u>basket</u> , <u>boats</u>			<u>Tribes</u> and <u>bands</u>	
	<u>Neolithic</u>	Handmade tools and objects found in nature – <u>chisel</u> , <u>hoe</u> , <u>plough</u> , <u>yoke</u> , <u>grain pourer</u> , <u>loom</u> , <u>earthenware (pottery)</u> and <u>weapons</u>	<u>Neolithic Revolution</u> - transition to <u>agriculture</u> . <u>Gathering</u> , <u>hunting</u> , <u>fishing</u> and <u>domestication</u>	<u>Farms</u>	<u>Tribes</u> and formation of <u>chiefdoms</u> in some <u>Neolithic</u> societies at the end of the period	
<u>Bronze Age</u>		<u>Copper</u> and <u>bronze</u> tools, <u>potter's wheel</u>	<u>Agriculture</u> – <u>cattle</u> – breeding, <u>agriculture</u> , <u>craft</u> , <u>trade</u>			
<u>Iron Age</u>		<u>Iron</u> tools		<u>Formation of cities</u>	<u>Formation of states*</u>	

## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Bronze Age Greece 3 – The Minoans and Myths

A myth is a sacred story or narrative explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form. More generally the word myth can refer to any traditional story. The main characters in myths are usually gods or supernatural heroes. In the society in which it is told, a myth is usually regarded as a true account of the far distant past. They explain how the world gained its current form and how customs and institutions were established. In some ways therefore myths are similar to history.

King Minos was associated in Greek myth with the labyrinth, the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans identified Minos with the site at Knossos. We do not know for certain if there was actually such a person as Minos or if all Cretan kings were called 'Minos' (just as all the ancient Egyptian rulers were called 'Pharaoh'). The legend or myth below tells how Minos came to be born. Of course it is not true. But, like most legends, it makes interesting reading.

#### The Legend of Minos' birth



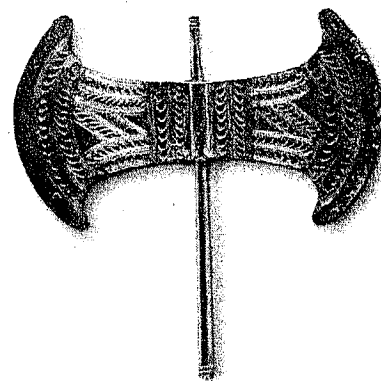
*Long, long ago there lived a princess called Europa. She was so beautiful that Zeus, the leader of all the Gods, fell madly in love with her. Zeus was already married to a Goddess. But that did not stop him having love affairs with anyone he fancied- So the God turned himself into a big bull and carried Europa away. With the princess clinging to his back, he swam all the way across the sea from mainland Greece to Crete. Zeus and Europa later had three sons. One of these was Minos.*

The most famous Minoan myth is that of Theseus and the Minotaur. Is the story completely made up, a fabrication? Or is it possible that there might be an element of truth in the story?

FACT: Bulls were very important to Minoan culture and many images and statues of bull's heads have been found.

FACT: The palace at Knossos contained so many rooms and passages that it must have been easy to get lost.

FACT: The palace was decorated with images of the double-headed axe or labrys (see right). Therefore the palace could be called 'the palace of the labrys' or labyrinth.



#### Activities

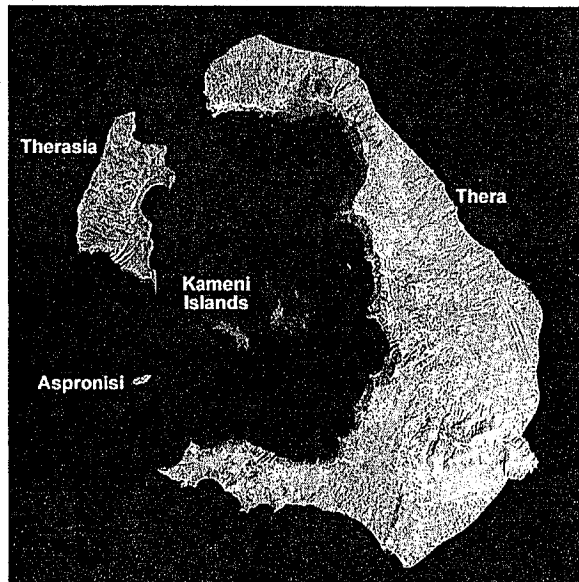
1. Explain the meaning of the word myth. In what ways are myths similar to history? In what important ways are they different?
2. What is an historical fact? What makes a fact different to an opinion?
3. How can the real historical facts about Minoan culture help us to explain the origins of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur?

## Year 3 Human Science

### History – Bronze Age Greece 4 – The Minoan Demise

In about 1450 BC the Minoan civilisation came to a sudden end. Historians do not know for certain what caused the sudden collapse and there are a number of different interpretations.

#### Theory 1 – Volcanic eruption



The Minoan eruption on the island of Thira occurred at a similar time to that of the Minoan decline. Thira is the present-day island Santorini which is a caldera about 100 km from Crete with an area of approximately 73 km<sup>2</sup>. This eruption was the second largest volcanic explosion in the history of civilization, ejecting approximately 60 km<sup>3</sup> of material. Ash from the volcano fell on Crete and choked off plant life, causing the starvation of the local population. The ash also possibly caused a dramatic change in the climate which made the crops fail.

#### Theory 2 – Earthquake

Terrible earthquakes took place under the sea to the north of Crete. They flattened or seriously damaged the Minoan palaces and towns. The earthquakes also helped to cause huge

**1.** Where the two plates rub against each other, a lot of friction takes place. Beneath the surface, rock is forced to bend. This causes energy to be stored. Eventually the bent rocks break and the stored energy is released in the form of "seismic" waves. These waves spread out from the focus (the place where the rock has broken). Where the seismic waves reach the earth's surface, the surface shakes. This trembling of the earth's surface is called an **earthquake**.

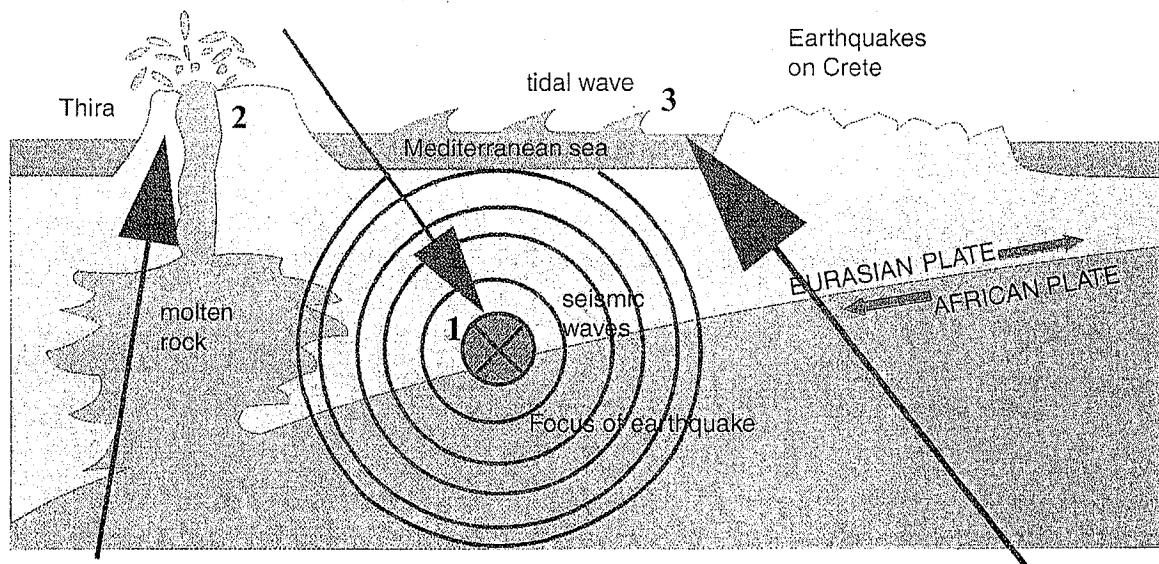


Figure 5.10

**2.** The meltdown of the African plate caused a **volcanic eruption** which blew apart the island of Thira around this time.

**3.** The earthquakes and volcanic eruption caused the seabed to shake. This caused terrible **tidal waves** to build up at sea.

tsunamis or tidal waves, which swept southwards across the sea to the coast of Crete. The huge waves smashed houses, flooded farms and drowned people and cattle. Why did these volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis happen?

You have learned already that two of the earth's crustal plates collide under the Mediterranean and that the heavier African Plate moves slowly under the lighter Eurasian Plate. It was this plate-movement which caused the earthquakes to take place (it also caused the island of Thira to be wrecked by a volcanic explosion). The earthquakes and volcanic explosion then caused the tidal waves. Some historians believe this is the origin of the myth of the city of Atlantis.



### Theory 3 – Invasion

The historian Sinclair Hood argued that the destruction of the Minoans was most likely due to an invading force of soldiers. Archaeological evidence suggests that the destruction of the island appears to be a result of fire damage. Hood notes that the palace at Knossos appears to have experienced less damage than other sites along the island of Crete. Because natural disasters do not choose targets, it is most likely that the destruction was a product of invaders, for these people would have seen the usefulness of a palace centre like Knossos.

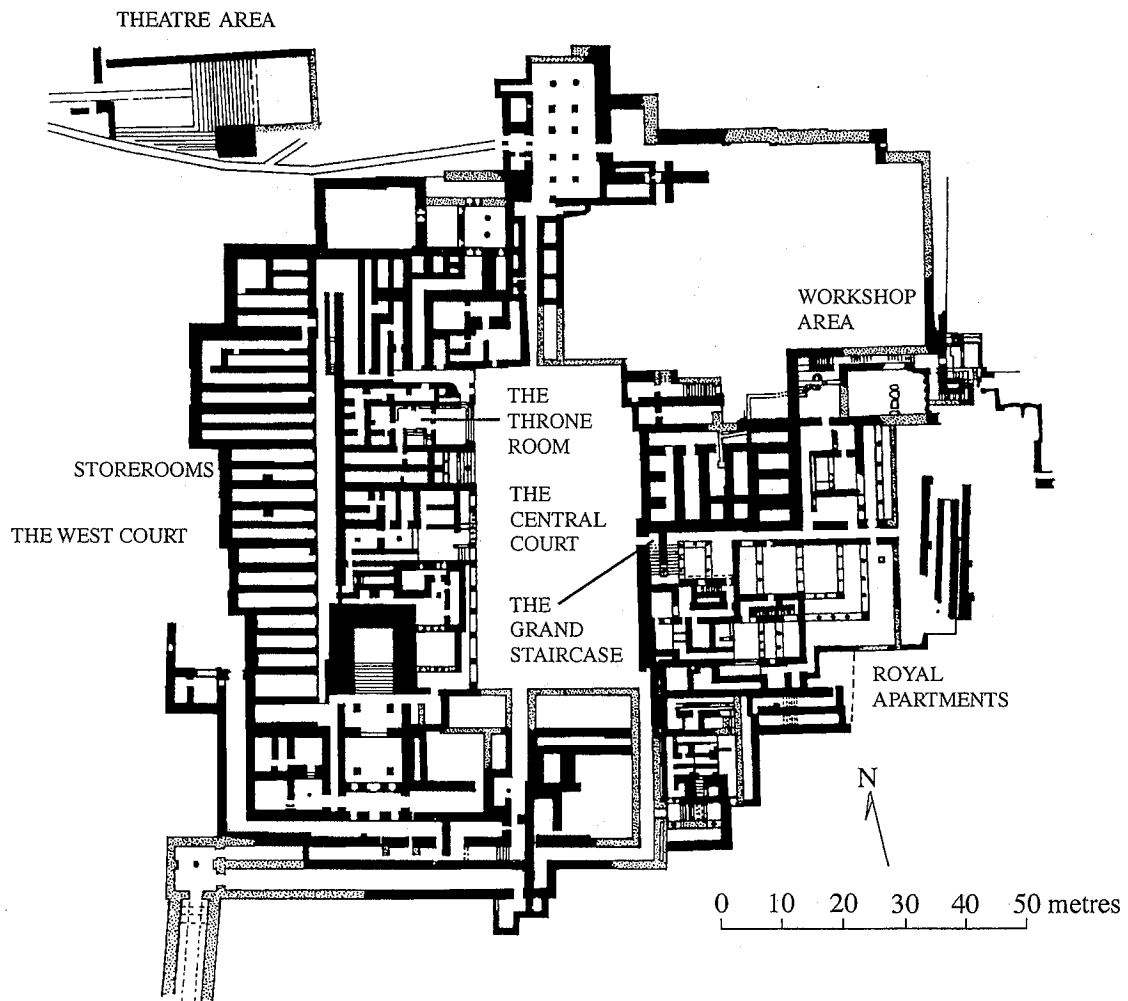
Whatever the reasons, Crete had lost its power. Instead, people on the Greek mainland became powerful. These mainland people are often referred to generally as Mycenaeans. We will learn about those people in our next lesson.

### Activities

1. Explain what is meant by 'historical interpretation'.
2. Explain the volcanic eruption theory for Minoan demise. As part of your explanation draw a map of the island Thira, before and after the eruption.
3. Explain the earthquake theory for Minoan demise. As part of your explanation draw a diagram to show how the movement of continental plates causes earthquakes in the region.
4. Explain the invasion theory for Minoan demise. Explain why archaeologists believe Minoan demise is not explained by earthquakes and volcanoes alone.
5. Write an historical interpretation of your own that explains the end of Minoan civilisation. Your interpretation should include all three of the theories above.



# THE PALACE OF KNOSSOS, CRETE



## Questions

1. There were three entrances to the Palace of Knossos. Find each of these entrances on the plan above and draw in on the plan how you would get to the Central Court from each entrance.
2. Using the scale and compass on the plan, answer the following questions.
  - a) The Central Court measures \_\_\_\_\_ metres North-South, and \_\_\_\_\_ metres East-West. (distance)
  - b) The Storerooms were on the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the palace. (direction)
  - c) The Royal Apartments were on the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the palace. (direction)
  - d) The Theatre Area is to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the palace. (direction)
  - e) The North-South length of the palace is \_\_\_\_\_ metres. (distance)
  - f) The Throne Room is approximately \_\_\_\_\_ metres from the West Court. (distance)

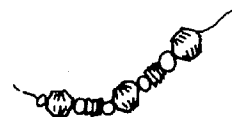
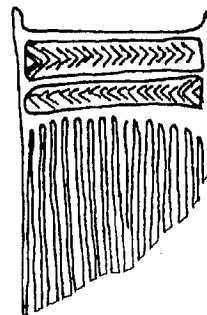
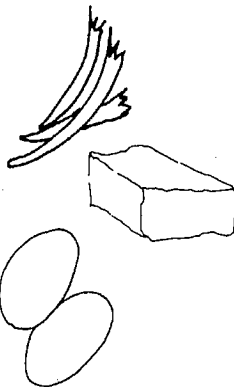
# THE PALACE OF KNOSSOS, CRETE

## ARTEFACT REPORT

**WHERE FOUND:** Workshop 1  
North-East section; Palace  
of Knossos

### ARTEFACTS:

- Horde of ivory elephant tusks
- Two complete ostrich eggs
- One block of unworked Egyptian alabaster



## ARTEFACT REPORT

**WHERE FOUND:** Workshop 2  
North-East section; Palace  
of Knossos

### ARTEFACTS:

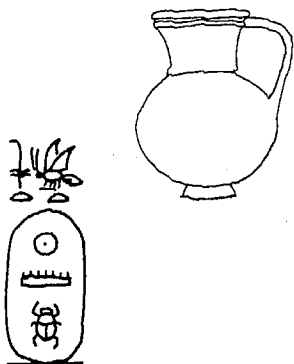
- Stone bead necklace
- Ivory comb. Unfinished. Apparently broken during manufacture

## ARTEFACT REPORT

**WHERE FOUND:** Storeroom 1  
West section; Palace of  
Knossos

### ARTEFACTS:

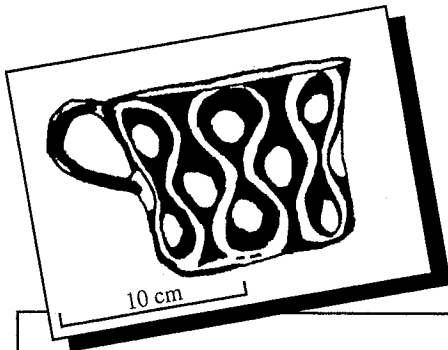
- Alabaster stone jug of local manufacture
- Clay seal bearing the name of the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmosis III (1504-1450 BC)



## Questions

1. The artefacts found in Storeroom 1 could not have been stored there before 1504 BC. How can we know this from the evidence found in this room?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do the elephant tusks and the block of Egyptian alabaster found in Workshop 1 indicate?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does the broken ivory comb tell us?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the artefacts shown above indicates trade with regions other than Greece?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What evidence is there for local manufacture of imported raw materials?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# POTTERY STUDY: THE MINOANS



- This cup was found in the Palace of Knossos and was made around 1800 BC. It was first painted black with white and orange paint being added to the top of that.

Another archaeologist has asked you to send a description of the cup. How would you describe the shape and decoration?

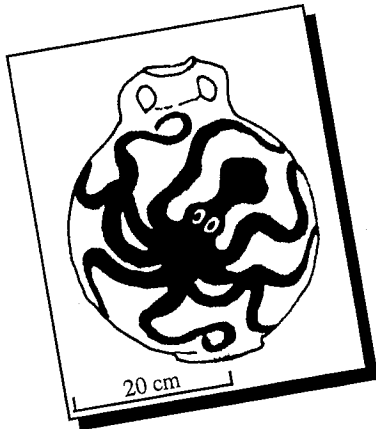
## ARTEFACT REPORT

WHERE FOUND:

SHAPE AND SIZE:

DECORATION:

POSSIBLE USE:



- This pot was also found in the Palace of Knossos but was made about 300 years after the cup above. For about 50 years before 1450 BC, the Minoans liked to decorate their pots with creatures from the sea like this octopus.

## Questions

1. When was this pot made?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How would you describe the difference between the decoration on both pieces of pottery? Do you think they are similar or very different in decoration?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think the decoration on this pot tells us about the Minoans?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What other archaeological evidence at Knossos have we seen which illustrates the importance of the sea in Minoan society?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

Each year the Athenians sent seven young men and seven young women as tribute (payment) to King Minos - the ruler at the Palace of Knossos in Crete. The Athenians had been ordered to do this because an ambassador from Crete had been murdered in Athens. When they arrived at the Palace of Knossos, the young Athenians were fed to the half-human, half-bull Minotaur which lived in a labyrinth (maze) under the palace. None ever returned.



When the annual tribute was demanded again, Theseus, the son of King Aegeus of Athens, volunteered to be one of the fourteen. His father made him promise that when he returned that he would change the black sail of the ship to a white one - if his mission to kill the Minotaur was successful. On Crete, Theseus and Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos, fell in love. Ariadne gave him a ball of wool to unravel as he searched for the Minotaur in the maze of corridors beneath the palace. Theseus killed the Minotaur and followed the trail of wool back out of the labyrinth. He sailed back to Athens, but in his excitement to get home, Theseus forgot to change the sail on his ship as he had promised his father. When King Aegeus saw the black sail he leapt into the sea thinking his son was dead. This is how the sea which surrounds most of Greece - The Aegean - got its name.

## Questions

1. What usually happened to the Athenians who were sent each year to Crete?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Theseus promise his father to change the colour of the sail on his ship?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How did Theseus find his way out of the labyrinth?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How did the Aegean Sea get its name?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The story of the Minotaur is a myth - although many myths have some elements of truth in them. Have another look at the plan for the Palace of Knossos and see if you can think why later Greeks believed the Minotaur lived beneath this palace in a maze.  
\_\_\_\_\_