



Bull Leapers
Palace of Minos, Knossos

Minoan Culture

Minoan Culture

c. 2200 B.C–1450 B.C.

The first European civilization began with the Minoans on the island of Crete. The Minoans were named after a character from Greek mythology named King Minos. The name Minos may also have been a title for their leaders similar to “Pharaoh” in Egypt.

The Minoans built their towns on the coast where there was rich farm land. They traveled by sea and traded their pottery and other goods with Egypt, Syria, and the southern islands of the Aegean. The largest palace was built and rebuilt in their capital city, Knossos.

It appears they believed in life after death, as the dead were buried with possessions to take to the afterlife. They developed an early Greek alphabet known as “Linear A.” They were a hedonistic (pleasure-seeking) culture. Many paintings portray festivals including some depicting “bull-leaping.” Apparently the culture ended from a combination of volcanic activity and attack from the Mycenaeans.



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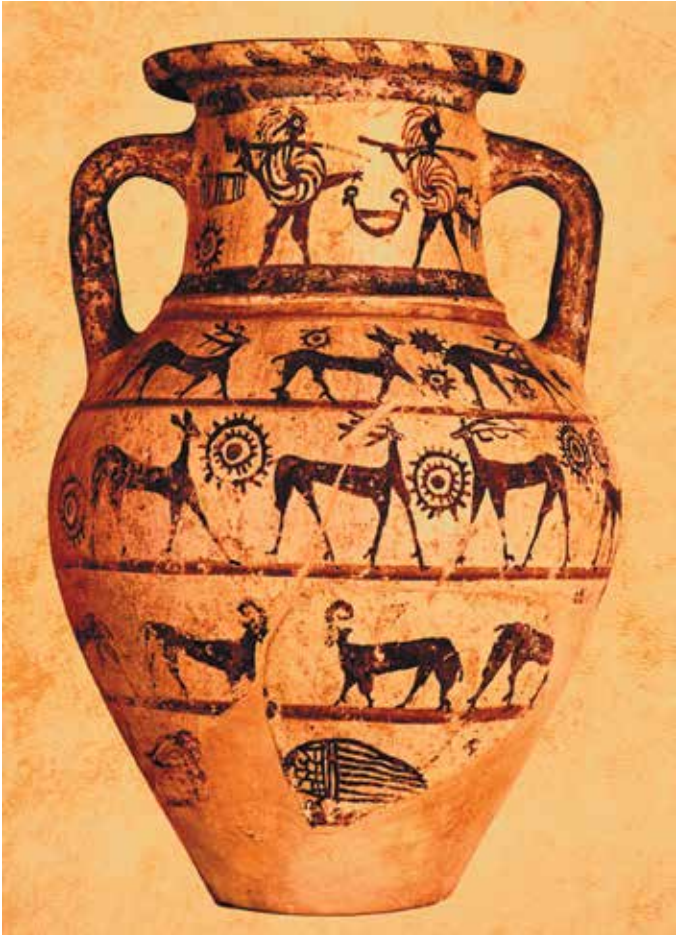
Kingfisher Hist. Enc., p. 16

Pages of History, Vol. 1, pgs. 164–167

Streams of Civ., Vol. 1, pgs. 75–78

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Mycenaean Culture

Mycenaean Culture

c. 1450 B.C–1200 B.C.

The warlike Mycenaean Greeks established themselves from Thessaly to the southern Peloponnesus by 1450 B.C. This civilization is named after its chief city, Mycenae. The Peloponnesus and Central Greece became important Mycenaean areas. We know this because there were citadels and royal tombs at Athens, Thebes and Mycenae.

Mycenaean culture was militaristic and commercial. The primary means of defense was the citadel. The citadel was a heavily fortified stronghold on a hilltop occupied by the ruling family and its army. An example of such a structure would be the citadel at Mycenae characterized by the Lion gate at the entrance which was excavated around the turn of the century. The Mycenaean were also skilled artisans who manufactured pottery and bronze weapons which they exported. Despite such trade, the Mycenaean supported their economy mostly by raids. Examples of their pottery and bronze work were found in their beehive-like tombs throughout Mycenae.

The Mycenaean civilization ended primarily due to the Dorian invasions around 1200 B.C.



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Kingfisher Hist. Enc., p. 17

Pages of History, Vol. 1, pgs. 167–170

Streams of Civ., Vol. 1, p. 79

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Trojan War

Trojan War

c. 1250 B.C.

Although a legend, some experts believe that a war actually took place around 1250 B.C. resembling the current story of the Trojan War. The Greek poet, Homer, popularized the story in his poem *The Iliad*. According to the legend, Helen of Troy, wife of the King of Sparta, was captured by Paris, a prince of Troy. Her capture is thought to have caused the Trojan War.

The Greeks joined together to defeat the Trojans and free Helen. They built a huge wooden horse, hid some soldiers in it—and placed it outside the city gates of Troy. The Trojans, overcome with curiosity and thinking the Greeks had left, brought the horse into the city. When darkness fell, the Greek soldiers crept out and opened the city gates. Additional soldiers entered, killed the sleeping Trojans, and destroyed the city.



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The Iliad

Pages of History, Vol. 1, pgs. 170–173

Trojan Horse

Usborne Internet-Linked Greeks, p. 14





Phoenician Temple and Alphabet Charts

Phoenician Civilization and the Alphabet

Phoenician Civilization and the Alphabet

c. 1200 B.C.–1000 B.C.

Originally desert nomads, the Phoenicians (the Canaanites of the Bible) lived in the land of Canaan. About 1200 B.C. they began to be called Phoenicians, named from the Greek word *phoinos*, or red, because of a wonderful reddish-purple dye they produced. The Phoenicians were merchants and traders and made extensive use of the sea to transport goods to and from their land. Due to their advanced ships, they were known as the greatest seafarers of the ancient world.

The Phoenician Alphabet was their most important contribution to civilization. This, the first known alphabet, became the basis of our own 26-letter alphabet. However, their alphabet had all consonants and no vowels.

The Phoenicians founded colonies at Sardinia, Utica, and Carthage. Carthage would emerge as a powerful trading empire whose conflicts with Rome would result in the Punic Wars.



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Kingfisher Hist. Enc., pgs. 28, 29

Pages of History, Vol. 1, pgs. 178–181

Streams of Civ., Vol. 1, pgs. 89–91

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