

# Ancient Crete: Minoan Civilization – Outline

## I. Archaeology

- a. Cretan history previously known only through myths and legends
- b. British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans found and studied remains on Crete
- c. Called “Minoan” civilization after numerous kings named Minos

## II. Natural resources

- a. Copper
- b. Fertile soil
- c. Gold
- d. Good harbors
- e. Lead
- f. Silver

## III. Early history

- a. 3000-1400 BCE – Cretan empire
- b. Parts of Asia and Greek peninsula, and other Aegean islands
- c. Major cities
  - i. Knossos (a.k.a. Cnossus)
  - ii. Phaestus

## IV. Economy

- a. Leading sailors and traders before the Phoenicians
  - i. Traded metal goods, pottery, and textiles
  - ii. Traded with Egyptians, Syrians, and others
- b. Strong navy
  - i. Exacted tribute from neighbors
  - ii. Protected the merchant marine

## V. Decline and fall

- a. 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE
  - i. Conquered by barbarians from central and eastern Europe
  - ii. Hellenes attacked and destroyed Crete
  - iii. Mixture of Cretans and Hellenes became the Greeks

## VI. Legacy

- a. Link between ancient Egypt and classical Greece
- b. Cretan writing remains largely undeciphered
- c. Palaces had baths, drains, and plumbing
- d. Stressed athleticism – boxing, dancing, and running
- e. Women enjoyed a level of equality with men

## VII. Art and religion

- a. Principal deity was a goddess
- b. Art illustrates religious festivals and rituals
- c. Colorful palaces
- d. Painting, pottery, and sculpture

## VIII. Review questions

- a. What famous British archaeologist first excavated and studied Minoan remains at Crete?
- b. Upon what was the Minoan economy based?
- c. What caused the decline of Minoan civilization?
- d. Describe Minoan culture.