

Outline 4: Middle Bronze Age Crete: the Minoans, Thera

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

Reading: C/F 32-33, 48-51

POSSIBLE TEST QUESTION???

Neolithic Figurines are about fertility

Cycladic figurines are about religion

E ε Epsilon is for Europa (Phoenician princess)

Effects of coming of Indo-Europeans

- brought idea of centaurs
- brought idea of sky gods instead of Mother Goddesses
- brought changes to language (Greek)

Mainland (Middle Helladic)

- architecture: apsidal-end houses
- Burials: Cist Graves=inhumation, individual burials, inside settlements
- wheel-made pottery: new shapes. 2 types, Minyan ware (has ribbing/lines carved into it), matt-painted ware (painted in a dull black pattern)
- regressed

Cyclades (Middle Cycladic)

- did not regress or progress

Crete (Middle Minoan) AKA Middle Bronze Age (MBA)

- in southern part of aegean sea
- well developed
- rich
- multilingual
- monarchy
- cities connected with paved roads
- Homer (C/F quotation p. 50)
- Indo-Europeans did not go to Crete
- economic and religious development

Minos myth

- Zeus disguised himself as a bull and Europa really liked animals and she climbed onto his back and they went to Crete
- Europa gives birth to son named Minos and he becomes the king of Crete and marries Pasiphae, he angers Poseidon and he decides to become even and made

Pasiphae fell in love with a handsome white bull, so she asked Daedalus to turn her into a cow so she could have sex with the bull and she gives birth to the Minotaur

- Minotaur lives in a labyrinth which was also made by Daedalus, every year there was a human sacrifice to the Minotaur (7 females and 7 males)
- Minotaur is killed by Athenian hero Theseus because he was given a roll of thread to make sure he could get out of the labyrinth, then Ariadne, daughter of Minos goes with Theseus but he ditched her

Sir Arthur Evans (1851-1941)

- thought he found the palace on Minos
- he found a small stone throne with benches on either side of it, because of its size, could be for a woman???
- Knossos=labyrinth of Daedalus?: found a structure bigger than 2 football fields, monumental architecture, which suggested it was the labyrinth that housed the Minotaur
- labrys=double axe (non-Greek word), he found small double axes in the structure and carved in the masonry
- Aghia Triadha Sarcophagus: has a religious scene on it and has double axes, whose 2 women pouring something into a container and they're accompanied by a musician playing a stringed instrument and there are 3 men wearing sheep skin skirts holding a boat, calves, an altar and there is also some sort of official, so therefore the axes have to do with something religious
- the larger bronze axes were used to sacrifice animals in large religious ceremonies, did not have anything to do with the labyrinth
- found lots of bull images (stone rhyton which are used in religious ceremonies, stone "horns" called horns of consecration, but may just look like horns but be nothing)
- sacrifice in the central court: found something called bull leaping, lots of paintings called Fresco (most frescoes depict women) and one depicts this, also bronze figurine of a leaping bull, it was thought that it had something to do with the sacrifices to the Minotaur, but the floor in the central court would not be suitable for bull leaping, he also thought this was unique to the Minoans in Crete, but it was actually happening all over the Mediterranean, Egypt, and Asia Minor
- bull leaping (C/F p. 50-51)

Common Features of Minoan 'Palaces'

- Malia has same features as Knossos
- complex plan
- huge central courtyard: not for bull leaping
- ashlar masonry: stone cut at right angles, blocks of stone
- multi-storey (C/F p. 51), if there are multiple stores, there are staircases
- storage areas (called storage magazines): long narrow rooms with cists (stone lined boxes, not burials) and huge jars called pithoi that store liquids, both serving a religious purpose

- theatral areas: precursors for theatres, more like a marketplace than a theatre
- no defences/fortifications

Features of Minoan Architecture

- horns of consecration
- inverted pillars (wider at the top than the bottom, hallmark of Minoan architecture)
- Frescoes led people to believe that the Minoans were relatively peaceful
- monumental staircases
- light wells: if you have multi-stories, you need to get light in multiple stories (like windows kind of)
- sophisticated water management: covered and baffled drains (controls flow of water, kind of like aqueducts), bathtubs (not connected to drains, perhaps not even a place to bathe), first flush toilets in Europe (do it in a bucket then throw it down a drain)

Minoan Palaces were Centres of

- redistributive economy (gold, silver and other raw materials were distributed)
- administration: you need writing for there to be administration, Phaistos disk (stamps impressed onto wet clay, 45 different symbols, stamped in a circular/spiral pattern, undeciphered, both sides of the clay stamped, first 'printed' document, there has only been one found so it is possible it is fake), Linear A (chunks of clay the size of cellphones, writtin in lines on one side of the clay, inscribed not stamped, 90 symbols, record a non-Greek language, undeciphered, connected with religion)
- religion: storage areas connect to areas for religion, religion connected to agriculture, Divinity: owner of the stuff in the storage area? recipient? guardian?, many believe it was a female divinity called the snake goddess
 - snake goddess (C/F p. 34 and p. 48); connected to the ground and the Earth because snakes slither on the ground, bare breasts connected to fertility, shedding of skin reflects new life/change, there are depictions of religious ceremonies dedicated to her
 - peak sanctuary (C/F p. 34 and 48); religious place on a mountains but also found in caves, depicted on a rhyton, has a shrine with horns of consecration and 3 alters, bronze male figurine shows a salute (religious gesture), Crete has many mountains so there are many sanctuaries
- government: who ruled Knossos? Evans thought it was a monarchy, but it probably wasn't, but it still unknown who the rulers of Knossos were
- industry: created decorations with scenes of sea life (octopus, sea shells, etc), jewelry with amber beads (amber comes from northern Europe in Baltic and Africa meaning there was extensive trade), the gold they used came from Egypt, harvesters' vase (a vase with a scene of agriculture, sheep, and people in a field depicted)
- can we call them palaces? no solid evidence that the other buildings were residential

Egypt: Keftiu (C/F p. 46-47)

- Minoans (called Keftiu in Egypt) were found depicted in Egyptian Frescoes made from 'ox-hide' copper ingot, on a gold rhyton, depicts a male Minoan bringing gifts to the pharaoh

Thalassocracy of Minos: Thucydides 1.4 (quotation C/F p.35)

- Thucydides: first historian to tell history in chronological order
- Thalassocracy: Minos had a fleet of ships and colonized the Cyclades
 - there is a paved road that connects Knossos to the sea and beyond
 - frescoes depict ships
 - no evidence in Cyclades that Minoans controlled it

Cyclades: Thera/Santorini: (C/F p. 32-3)

- Thera was buried in ash after a volcanic eruption, but the people had enough warning to get out in time, because no bodies were found, so there is a preserved Middle Bronze Age town influenced by the Minoans

Akrotiri

- housing: mud brick buildings with wooden doorways as an influence of the Minoans in Thera
- frescoes: depict people dressed like Minoans
- clothing: like Minoans, fancily decorated, exposed breasts
- eruption: beam weevil fossils show it erupted in early summer, radio carbon in 1660-1613 BCE, ice cores showed 1646, dendrochronology showed 1628, therefore it erupted between 1613-1660 BCE
- used to be believed that the eruption ended the Minoan civilization, but that didn't occur until 1450 BCE

Minoans Had ALL of These

Agriculture

Towns

Monumental Buildings

Metallurgy

System of Writing

Minoans: 1st civilized Europeans

Classics Museum Replicas: Phaistos Disk, snake goddess, Harvesters' Vase (one man has fallen down - can you find him?)

Images: double axe (C/F p. 48 and 49), bull leaping C/F p. 50), snake goddess (C/F p. 34 and p. 48), peak sanctuary rhyton (C/F p. 34 and 48), Keftiu (C/F p. 46-47), Thera frescoes (C/F p. 32-33). Plan of Knossos (attached below)

Words to Remember:

People: Lapiths, Minos, Europa, Zeus, Minos, Pasiphae, Daedalus, Theseus, Ariadne, Evans, Thucydides

Places: Knossos, Crete, Thera, Akrotiri

Terms: Minoan, labyrinth, *labrys*, double axe, larnax, sarcophagus, fresco, inverted column, light well, horns of consecration, Phaistos disk, Linear A, peak sanctuary, rhyton

Think About It!

1. Why did Evans call the Middle Bronze Age inhabitants of Crete 'Minoan'? (at least 4 reasons)
2. How did the Minoans influence the culture on Thera?
3. What features do Minoan palaces have in common?
4. What evidence do we have of Minoan contact with Egypt?

Fun Stuff

Bull Leaping: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1L-8xLI_5c

Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXjvB4w_no (100 minutes)

Plan of Knossos

