Definition: **Minoan civilization** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Ancient Aegean civilization that flourished c.3000-c.1100 BC on the island of Crete, named after the legendary King Minos. The Minoan period divides into three main eras: **Early** (c.3000-c.2100 BC), **Middle** (c.2100-c.1550 BC), and **Late** (c.1550-c.1100 BC). In terms of artistic achievement and power, Minoan civilization peaked in the Late period. The prosperity of Bronze Age Crete is evident from the works of art and palaces excavated at Knossos, Phaistos, and other sites. Its empire was based on trade and seafaring.

Summary Article: **Minoan civilization**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(mĭnō‘Ěn), ancient Cretan culture representing a stage in the development of the Aegean civilization. It was named for the legendary King Minos of Crete by Sir Arthur Evans, the English archaeologist who conducted excavations there in the early 20th cent. Evans divided the culture into three periods that include the whole of the Bronze Age: Early Minoan (c.3000 B.C.–2200 B.C.), Middle Minoan (c.2200 B.C.–1500 B.C.), and Late Minoan (c.1500 B.C.–1000 B.C.). Early Minoan saw the slow rise of the culture from a Neolithic state with the importation of metals, the tentative use of bronze, and the appearance of a hieroglyphic writing. In the Middle Minoan period the great palaces appeared at Knossos and Phaistos; a pictographic script (known as Linear A; see Linear Scripts) was used; ceramics, ivory carving, and metalworking reached their peak; and Minoan maritime power extended across the Mediterranean. Toward the end of the period an earthquake, and possibly an invasion, destroyed Knossos, but the palace was rebuilt. During this period there is evidence of a new script (Linear B), at Knossos, an early form of the Greek language that argues the presence of Mycenaen Greeks. Other luxurious palaces existed at this time at Gournia, Cydonia (now Khaniá), and elsewhere. Knossos was again destroyed c.1500 B.C., probably as a result of an earthquake and subsequent invasion from the Mycenaean mainland. The palace at Knossos was finally destroyed c.1400 B.C., and the Late Minoan period faded out in poverty and obscurity. After the final destruction of Knossos, the cultural center of the Aegean passed to the Greek mainland (see Mycenaen civilization).

See Evans, Sir Arthur J., *Palace of Minos* (4 vol., 1921-25, repr. 1964);
Pendlebury, J. D. S., *Archaeology of Crete* (1939, repr. 1963);
Hood, S., *The Minoans* (1971);
Simpson, R. H., *Mycenaen Greece* (1982);
Harding, A., *The Mycenaens and Europe* (1984);

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