

# Example of essay on cretan civilization

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A Greek island in the Mediterranean, lying south-east of the mainland Greece; Crete has been a magnet for anthropological studies since centuries. Surrounded by Antiochia, Mesopotamia and Egypt-it was greatly influenced by its neighbours in terms of culture and technical development.

Referred to as the “ the first link in the European chain” by W. J. Durant, a prolific American historian, the Minoan civilization flourished during the Bronze Age from 2000BC to 1400BC. Nineteenth Century British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans coined this name when he began excavation in Knossos in 1900, thinking to have discovered the palace of the legendary king Minos who appeared in many a Greek myth.

Considered as one of the most sophisticated, orderly and skilled; the Cretan civilization left their mark in history for their dexterity in seamanship. These mercantile people made their land into a centre of international trade by utilizing their strategic geographical positioning between the Middle East and the sources of much-needed minerals in the Balkans , Italy and as far west as Spain. Manufacture of elite goods like bronze weapons, armour and jewellery has been found. They also traded in saffron which has been discovered by a fresco found in Santorini.

The advancement of the Minoan culture is evident in their use of language and script- hieroglyphic and a Linear A script which has not been deciphered yet. Minoan tombs cemeteries and settlements have been excavated throughout Crete including four palaces of Knossos, Phaistos, Malia and Zakros which give an insight into their social structure. The sport of bull-leaping, the worship of bulls is indicated through the explicit depiction of sacred bulls' horns and double axes or ‘ labrys’ on stones and frescos. It is speculated that this gave birth to the legend of Theseus and the labyrinth-

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dwelling Minotaur well known in Greek Mythology.

The demise of the Minoan Civilization has been attributed to a number of reasons from earthquakes, volcanoes to the emergence of Mycenaean Civilization but due to the indefinite answer provided by the historical records it still remains a widely debated topic among anthropologists giving the Cretan Civilization an aura of mysticism.