

Minoan and Mycenaean Cultures

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The Minoans, people of the Aegean Sea area, lived on Crete, Santorini and other islands. One of their great treasures is the palace Knossos. There are many important artifacts to be found in this huge palace. The Mycenaean lived in a mountain-guarded city called Tiryns. This also had many important artifacts hinting at the mystery of their daily lives.

The Minoans covered Knossos with amazingly detailed frescoes, not the dry, but the wet frescoes. Wet frescoes take a long time to finish, meaning that the Minoans loved the arts, and wanted them to be beautiful. Some of their frescoes had dolphins and other fish referring to the Minoans' love and need of the sea. They drew rocky seascapes with highly detailed flowers and of birds that lived in those areas. They drew of themselves, long black-haired women with red lipstick and beautiful dresses, hinting at their extreme wealth. They had pearl necklaces, possibly harvested from the sea, and even laced their hair with pearls. Pictures of bullfighting with men riding the bulls and taunting them also abound. It might mean that they liked sport and entertainment for the populace. They drew fishermen with large catches, wearing just pants and no shoes. There was probably a distinct difference between the rich and the poor in Knossos. They built lots of ships, both fishing and fighting vessels. While fighting was not a major part of their lifestyle, they made vases with war parties that held shields and swords.

The Mycenaean on the other hand were a nation of warriors. They had vases made with heavily armored men crushing the enemy as they rose up mountaintops. They built gold cups decorated with hunting parties killing wild bulls. They had many daggers embroidered with gold and men with spears attacking lions and other animals. Other daggers displayed men hunting warthogs. Then Mycenaean favored war to the arts, and didn't focus too much on the arts. Their city had little ventilation and few windows. They built twenty foot high hallways that led to their city, possibly to defend against attacks. Although there was little gold in Greece, they somehow built tons of objects out of gold. They also created death masks out of gold like the Egyptians. This might mean that they traded with the Egyptians to obtain gold. Mycenaean must have been a powerful people that like to fight and traded for the materials not found in their native home of Greece.

These two cultures both have amazing artifacts and highly decorated items like daggers and vases. While the Mycenaean favored war, and decorated mainly their weapons, and the Minoans favored the arts and decorated the inner walls of their city, these two cultures were a lot alike. Their cities were both heavily defended, one being on an island and the other surrounded by mountains. Attacks must have been quite a nuisance for these two cultures, as barbarians and pirates might want to take the treasures, and the gold of these peoples. The Minoans were probably a lot wealthier than the Mycenaean, but there were also a lot of poor Minoans to carry out the jobs of peasants. Both nations had high respect for the kings, and the Mycenaean went so far as to make death masks of their dead rulers. While differing on a lot of points, these two peoples also are quite the same.