AIM: HOW CAN ART BE UTILIZED TO STUDY THE BRONZE AGE GREEK CIVILIZATION OF THE MINOANS?

MOTIVATION: BASED ON THIS LEGENDARY MUSICAL SCORE AND ON YOUR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF GREECE WHAT INFERENCES CAN YOU MAKE ABOUT IT'S HISTORY & IT'S CIVILIZATIONS?
DECYPHERING THE MINOAN PAST THROUGH THE CRITICAL LENS OF ART: GROUP ACTIVITY

“Art is the signature of civilizations” – Beverley Sills.
Ceremonial Entrance to the Palace of Knossos, Late Minoan II, ca. 1450 BCE
Cycladic/Cretan/Minoan Galley (below)

Fresco of Minoan Ships, probably in the Harbour of Amnisos
1. Bronze Age civilization arose on island of Crete and came to dominate as a **maritime power** the shores and islands of the Aegean Sea.

2. Named after the legendary **King Minos**. A large palace (2000 B.C.E) had been discovered at **Knossos** on the island of Crete.
3. Minoans grew grapes, grain, and olives and traded with the Greeks, Egyptians, and others in the Eastern Mediterranean region. There existed cultural diffusion between the Minoans & other Bronze Age civilizations in the region.
**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:** The Minoans are considered the first European civilization. They were fortunate in their location. The civilization was based on the island of Crete, and expanded to other island cities in the Mediterranean. Their island location probably protected them from serious invasion, and their position as a crossroads to Asia, Africa and Europe facilitated their economic success. We do not know a great deal about their existence, except for the frescoes and palaces they

**CONCLUDING JOURNAL ENTRY:**

1. How were the Minoans affected by their environment?

2. What does the palace at Knossos suggest about the Minoans?

**DOCUMENT C: DECLINE OF THE MINOANS**

Herodotus writes of the Minoan civilization which had long since disappeared. He refers to famine and pestilence which may have followed the volcanic eruption of Thera (Santorini), now believed to have precipitated the end of this once great civilization, though he apparently does not know of the cause.

“Minos, according to tradition, went to Sicania, or Sicily, as it is now called, in search of Daidolos, and there perished by a violent death....Men of various nations now flocked to Crete, which was stripped of its inhabitants; but none came in such numbers as the Hellenes. Three generations after the death of Minos the Trojan war took place; and the Cretans were not the least distinguished among the helpers of Menelaos. But on this account, when they came back from Troy, famine and pestilence fell upon them, and destroyed both the men and the cattle. Crete was a second time stripped of its inhabitants, a remnant only being left; who form, together with fresh settlers, the third Cretan people by whom the
AIM: HOW CAN MYTH BE UTILIZED TO STUDY THE BRONZE AGE GREEK CIVILIZATION OF THE MYCENEANA?

MOTIVATION: DESCRIBE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE “TROJAN WAR”?
Rise of Minoan Civ. on Crete (c.1900 BCE) with:
- Strong trade & navy ➔ Spread infl. over Aegean
- No fortif.'s needed since Crete was so isolated

Rich peaceful soc. characterized by:
- Higher status for women in absence of warrior class
- Elaborately decorated pottery
- Sophis., archit., palace complex (Knossos), & drainage system

Minoans prosper until volcanic eruption on Thera north of Crete (c.1500 B.C.E.) ➔
- Shock waves destruct. buildings on Crete
- Volcanic ash kills crops on Crete
- Tidal wave wrecks Minoan navy & trade

Conquest of Minoans by Mycenaean characterized by:
- Indep. palace-states, but centralized like Egypt & Mesop.
- Very wealthy society from trade across the Near East
- Warlike soc. as seen in their fortif.'s, armor & pottery art

Soc. flourished until upheavals, which the Myc.'s may have joined (e.g., Trojan War), disrupted Mycenaean trade

Grain shortages in Greece
- Hurts trade even more
- Wars b/w palace states
- Weakens the Mycenaean

Myc's fall ➔ Greek Dark Age (FC.18)
1. Government was a monarchy.
3. Archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann discovered Troy in NW Turkey. Treasures found, elaborate tombs, gold jewelry and ornaments, cups, inlaid weapons.
Homer’s Epics the **ILIAD** & **ODYSSEY** were written.

- The **ILIAD** tells the story of the Trojan War and is essentially the birth of literature in Western Civilization.
- The **ODYSSEY** is the story of Odysseus’ return to Greece after the Trojan War is over.

(A cultural parallel in India to Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey might be the Indian epic poems known as the Mahabharata and the rah-mahyuhnuh).
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Homer, the first known Greek poet, wrote of another civilization that arose after the fall of the Minoans. It was called the Mycenaean civilization. Mycenaean kings waged a war against Troy. According to the story, the Mycenaean tricked the Trojans into wheeling a large, wooden horse into their city. Inside the horse, Greek soldiers waited to attack. This event is known as the Trojan War.

DOCUMENT D: Homer, Iliad and the Odyssey

“...a thing was this, too, which that mighty man wrought and endured in the carven horse, where in all we chiefs of the Argives were sitting, bearing to the Trojans death and fate! But come now, change thy theme, and sing of the building of the horse of wood, which Epeius made with Athena's help, the horse which once Odysseus led up into the citadel as a thing of guile, when he had filled it with the men who sacked Ilion...”

3. How were the Mycenaean successful in their defeat of Troy?

4. Why are the poems of Homer important to preserving early Aegean heritage?
5. Describe the events of the comic strip above in your own words.
After the collapse of Mycenaean civ, this began the period in Greek history known as the Dark Ages, which lasts from approx. 1200-800BCE. During this time old major settlements were abandoned and the population dropped dramatically and there was very little interaction existing for three centuries. Eventually, there was an economic recovery by the 9th century BC, which brought Greece into a new era.
Aim: How did Ancient Athens originate as a democracy?

1. Hellenic/Classical Greece
800 BCE - 338 BCE
Define: Polis

What previous polis have you studied?

3. Classical Athens seen from the northwest. (Watercolor by Peter Connolly)
1. After 800 B.C.E. government revolved around a city-state (*polis*), *polities* varying in size and embracing a city and its agricultural hinterland.

2. City-states were ruled by landowning aristocrats descended from Indo-European warriors. They and free farmer citizens met to discuss political issues in councils.
3. By 500 B.C.E. most city-states were based upon loyalty to the public community. Widespread participation in public life by male citizens was common.
1. Athens took the lead in democratic development, but Solon’s reforms did not resolve all societal tensions. Pisistratus ruled as a tyrant, but following his death the reformer Cleisthenes reestablished a council elected by all citizens.

2. Athens depended upon a popular assembly of citizens as sovereign authority.
The word democracy comes from the Greek words demos meaning “people” and kratia meaning “authority.” Participatory democracy was established in many Greek city-states during the fifth century BCE. Citizens were granted the right to put forward proposals for laws or action, vote on government policies, hold political office, and serve on a jury. In practice, many poor citizens could not afford the time to participate in government life, and noncitizens, who included women and slaves, had no political rights. Democracy in Athens was the most advanced in ancient Greece. Spartan government remained unique with a powerful oligarchy (a form of government in which a few powerful people govern) and a huge underclass called helots.

**c. 1000–800 BCE**
City-states develop as tribes unite around the largest settlement in their area. Each city-state (polis) is ruled by a local Dorian king, with advice from wealthy nobles.

**c. 800–700 BCE**
Aristocratic landowners overthrow kings and become rulers. Ordinary people have no say in government or justice.

**c. 700–600 BCE**
Champions in armies of many city-states overthrow aristocracies. These popular and respected champions are called tyrannois, meaning “lords.” (The word tyrant comes from this term.)

**c. 600–500 BCE**
In many city-states, descendants of tyrants rule poorly and come to be despised. Poorer people fall into debt, lose their land, and are forced into slavery. Tyrants are overthrown in violent uprisings.

**594 BCE**
Reforms of Solon in Athens curtail aristocratic power, emancipate peasants enslaved through debt, and entitle citizens to have law cases publicly heard in court.

**509–507 BCE**
Reforms of Cleisthenes establish a democratic framework in Athens based on equality of political rights for all citizens.

**c. 500–400 BCE**
Democracy is established in many Greek city-states.

**c. 461 BCE**
Radical democracy in Athens under Pericles. All members of the council receive a small payment, enabling poorer citizens to participate.
3. Council of 500 (Executive Committee) oversaw the assembly, administering daily affairs. Most officials were chosen by lot and were responsible to the assembly. Citizens formed the army and served as jurors.

4. Women, slaves, & foreigners were excluded from political rights, and aristocrats, as Pericles and Alcibiades, had excessive importance.

5. Greek political life emphasized individual participation, & formal law was very important to the Greeks.
1. What percent of adult male citizens in Athens could vote in the Assembly? What percent were eligible to become members of the smaller Council of 500?

2. Judging by the illustration, what generalization can you make about the attendance of Athenian citizens at Assembly meetings?

3. What does it mean that the Council of 500 was chosen "by lot"? Was that a good idea?
Athens had tried other forms of government before it developed into a democracy. Solon, an archon famous for his wisdom, greatly aided in the growth of democracy. He improved Athenian government through the 570’s. By the 5th century BCE, most male citizens of Athens could participate firsthand in making major decisions. Such a government was called a direct democracy.

Document #1: Aristotle, 352 BCE

“In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme.”

Document #2: Pericles’ Funeral Oration from Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, 431 BCE

“Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. Our government does not copy our neighbors’, but is an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few. But while there exists equal justice to all and alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit…. As for education, the enemy subjects their children from their earliest boyhood to the most laborious training in manly courage. We, with our unrestricted way of life, are just as ready to face the dangers as they are.”

Document #3: Athens, 450 BCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult male citizens with the power to vote</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens without political power</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign born residents of Athens</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Citizens were considered to be only male, property owners

Document #4: Plato, The Republic, 327 BCE

“We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as harmless, but as useless character.”

1. Based on Documents 1-3, was everyone included in Athenian democracy?
2. What groups were excluded?
3. Based on this information, was Athens truly democratic? Explain your answer.
4. Based on Document #4, under what circumstances were men considered useless? Why?
“It is a democracy when the free [and poor] are sovereign and an oligarchy [the rule of the few] when the rich are, but it comes about that the sovereign class in a democracy is numerous and that in an oligarchy small because there are many [poor] men of free birth and few rich.”

WHAT ARE ARISTOTLE’S BELIEFS ABOUT DEMOCRACY? DO YOU AGREE WITH HIM?