

# THE MINOANS

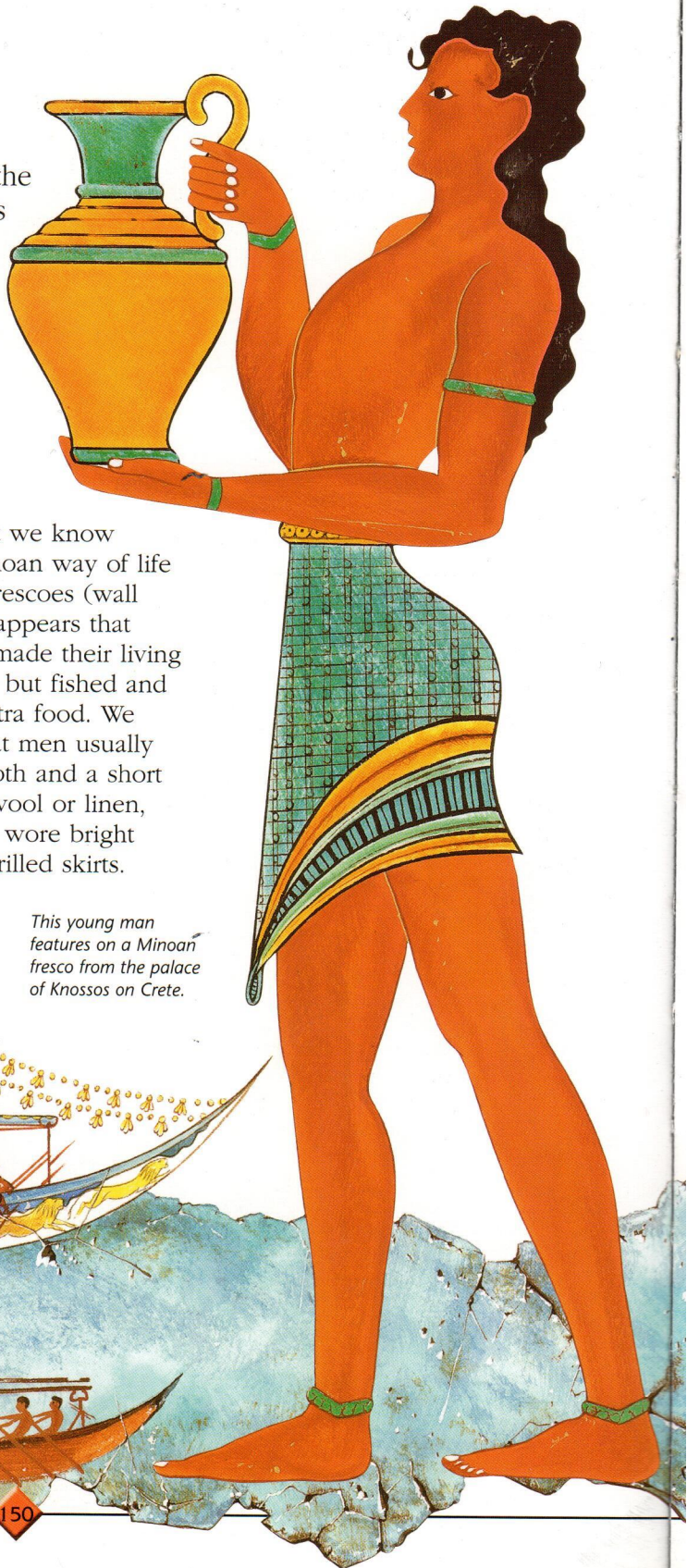
The first ever European civilization developed on Crete, the largest of the Greek islands. It began to flourish around the year 2000BC, but mysteriously died out less than a thousand years later. Its remains were first discovered in the 1920s, by a British archaeologist, Sir Arthur Evans. He named it the Minoan civilization, after a legendary king of Crete named Minos.

## MINOAN LIFE

Minoan civilization was based around several large palaces, each of which was at the heart of a thriving local community - with skilled craftsmen, artists, and professional writers known as scribes. The Minoans also had a highly organized economy and system of trade. Their goods have been found all over Greece, the Cyclades islands, Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean.

Much of what we know about the Minoan way of life comes from frescoes (wall paintings). It appears that most people made their living from farming, but fished and hunted for extra food. We also know that men usually wore a loincloth and a short kilt made of wool or linen, while women wore bright dresses with frilled skirts.

*This young man features on a Minoan fresco from the palace of Knossos on Crete.*



*A Greek historian called Thucydides wrote that King Minos had a powerful fleet of ships. The ones shown here are taken from a fresco on the island of Thera (now called Santorini).*