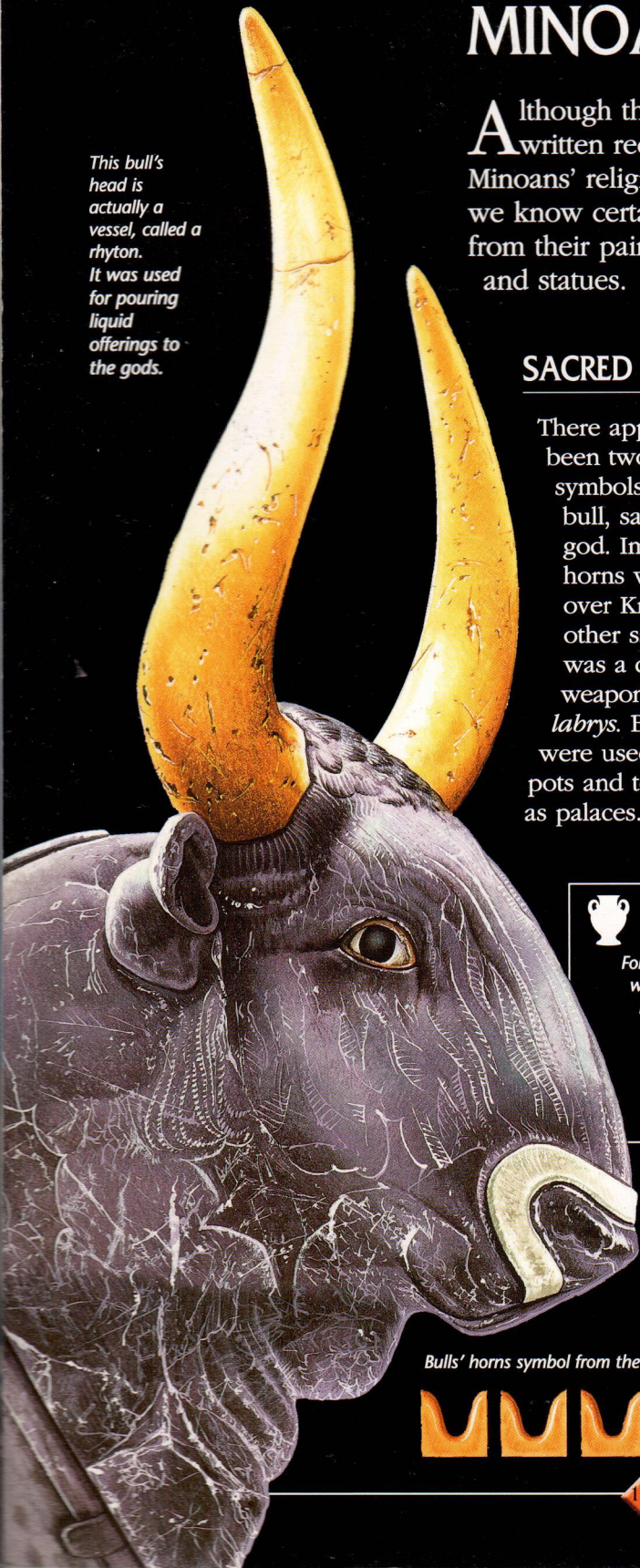


MINOAN RELIGION

This bull's head is actually a vessel, called a rhyton. It was used for pouring liquid offerings to the gods.



Although there are no written records of the Minoans' religious beliefs, we know certain things from their paintings, pots and statues.

SACRED SYMBOLS

There appear to have been two main sacred symbols. One was the bull, sacred to the sea god. Images of its horns were found all over Knossos. The other sacred symbol was a double-headed weapon, known as a *labrys*. Both of these were used to decorate pots and tombs, as well as palaces.

Double-headed weapon, called a labrys



RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

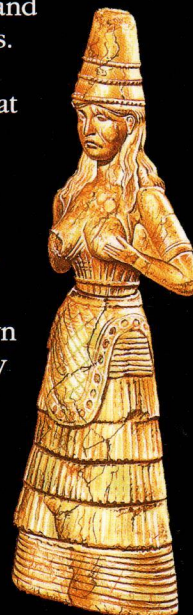
Religious ceremonies were led by priests and priestesses, while musicians played. Rooms were set aside for worship in the palaces, but Minoans also used outdoor shrines in caves and on mountain tops.



INTERNET LINK

For a link to a website where you can find out more about Minoan religion and see pictures of Minoan priests, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com

It seems likely that goddesses and priestesses were more important than gods and priests. We know this because females are shown more prominently in religious statues and paintings.



This small marble statue is probably a Minoan priestess.

Bulls' horns symbol from the palace of Knossos

