

The legend of the Minotaur from Crete



Legends are stories that are told as true, but cannot be proved.

The Minotaur in Greek stories had the head of a bull and the body of a man. The Minotaur lived in a maze at Knossos on the island of Crete.

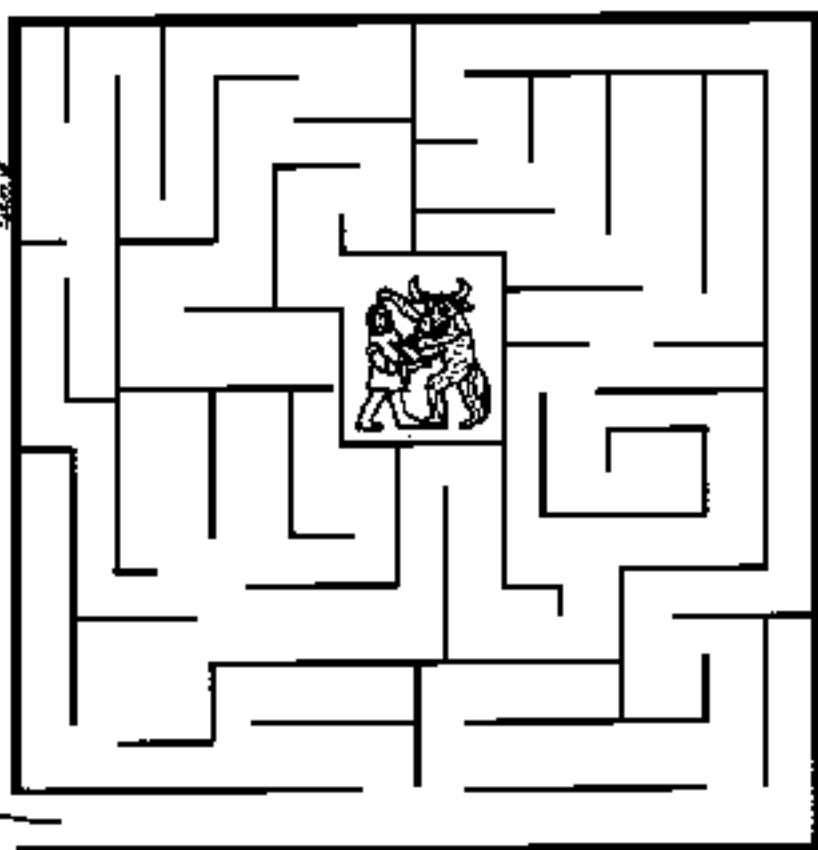
Every 7 years the King of Crete had to send 7 young men and 7 young women into the Maze. Some got lost in the maze and died. Others were eaten by the Minotaur. No one ever came out of the Maze.

One year Theseus, a brave young man, came to Crete. He fell in love with the King's daughter Ariadne. She gave him a large ball of string to unwind as he went into the maze.

Theseus found the Minotaur and killed it with his sword. He followed the string and got out safely to Ariadne.

TASK:

Help Theseus find his way out of the maze by drawing his route to Ariadne. You must not cut through any walls.



Archaeologists dig up the facts in Crete

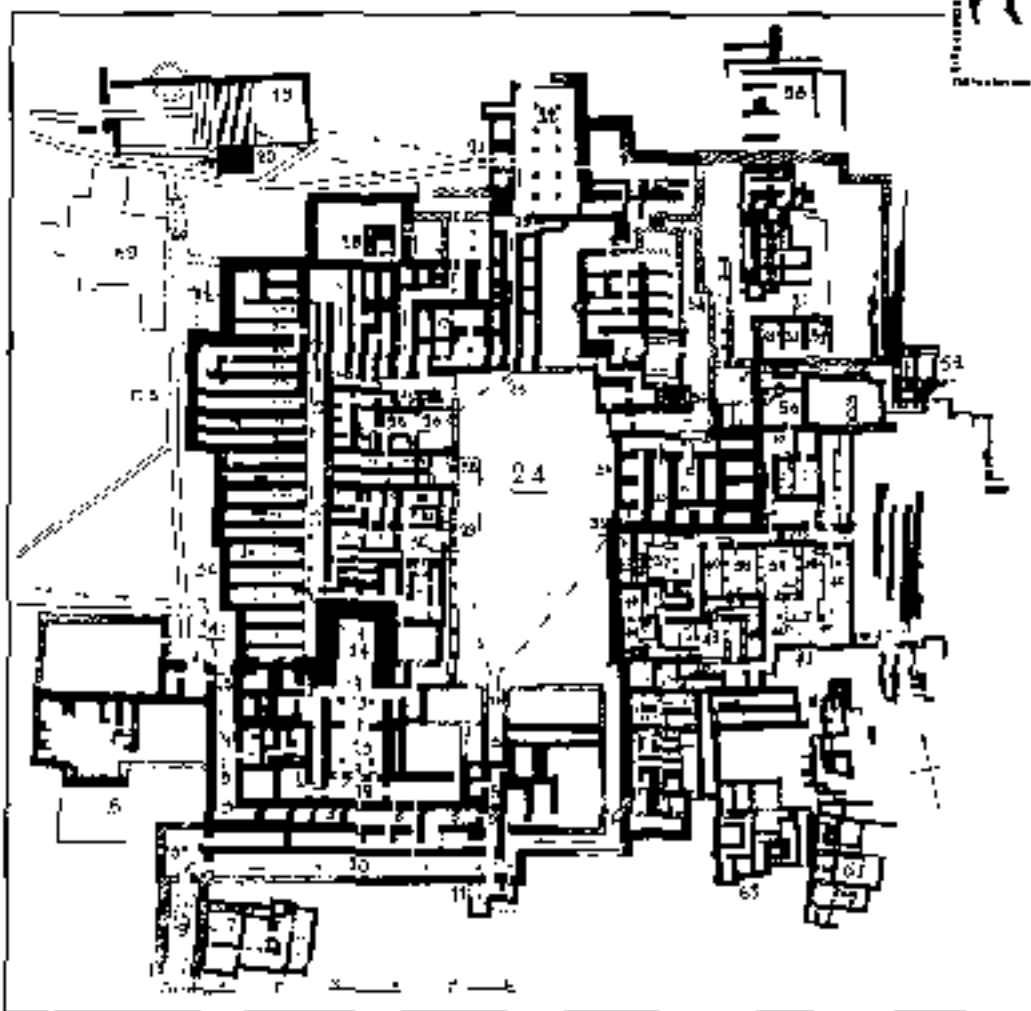
Sir Arthur Evans began to dig up the palace of Knossos, Crete, in 1900.

He found a maze of broken down walls. His plan of the ruins at Knossos looks like a Maze.



Evans found a Fresco (a wall painting) that showed how the ancient people of Knossos made sport with bulls.

The acrobats, both men and women, grabbed hold of the charging bull's horns and leapt in a somersault over the bull.



Evans also found a black stone statue of a bull's head in the entrance to the temple at Knossos.

It was used to pour a blood sacrifice on the altar in the Temple at Knossos.



TASK: True or False

- A. Using the evidence on pages 26 and 27 say whether you think the statements below are true or false or that the evidence does not help you decide.
- 1) The Minotaur lived in the Maze at Knossos.
 - 2) Sir Arthur Evans found a Maze when he dug up Knossos.
 - 3) The fresco Evans dug up showed people from Knossos making sport with a bull.
 - 4) Arthur Evans dug up the head of the Minotaur in 1900.
 - 5) Evans dug up a Bull's head made of black stone that had been used in the Temple at Knossos in ancient times.
- B. Can you suggest ways in which the story of the Minotaur came to be told?