

ARCH 324 | Crete and the Aegean from Prehistory to the early Byzantine period Winter 2027

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“Crete and the Aegean from Prehistory to the early Byzantine period” is intended to explore the rich and complex history of Crete from the Bronze age (circa 3000 BCE) through the Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and early Byzantine periods (up to the 7th century CE), tracing the island’s evolving cultural, political, and religious landscape. Through a combination of classroom instruction and field experiences, students will engage directly in Crete’s historical legacy.

Museum and site visits, such as Akrotiri at Thera (Santorini), Knossos, and Gortyn in Crete offer firsthand encounters with issues concerning material culture. Special emphasis is placed on inscriptions, which serve as vital historical documents revealing civic organization, religious practices, and linguistic transitions. In addition, students will develop the skills to analyze epigraphic and select papyrological sources, gaining insight into how these materials contribute to the reconstruction of historical narratives. The course delves into iconic figures of Cretan mythology—including Minos, the Labyrinth, and the Minotaur—exploring their enduring impact on subsequent literary traditions. It also draws from a range of literary and documentary sources to shed light on the evolving identity of Crete through the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine periods.

By the end of the course, students will have developed a nuanced understanding of Crete’s historical trajectory, its role in the Aegean and Mediterranean networks, and the interplay between myth, inscriptions, and lived experience.

Course Description

The aim of the course is to acquaint students with inscriptions and papyri as writing materials, archaeological objects and texts. In particular, the aims are:

1. To familiarize students with the various types and forms of the ancient inscriptions from Crete or Greek papyri as writing surfaces and with the epigraphical and papyrological bibliography.
3. The development of the ability to understand ancient texts and the cultural, political and economic reasons that created the need to write these texts.
4. The introduction to the major corpora of the Greek inscriptions and papyri and the understanding of the proper scientific ways to publish an ancient text.
5. To introduce students to various aspects of Cretan mythology and explore ancient Greek perceptions of Crete.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

1. To understand the use of the ancient writing materials, and to know how to draw various pieces of information from the ancient inscriptions.
2. To discuss methodological issues regarding the study of an area and reconstruct various factors of the ancient society.
3. To use the latest online instruments (databases, online editions etc.).
4. To examine the development of key Cretan myths over time and explore shifting perceptions of Crete and its inhabitants within broader Greek cultural and historical contexts.

Course Requirements

i) Required Reading

For each class/visit, the Reading of one or two papers is Required. Ideally, the participants should read these papers before the class, in order to comprehend the topic and participate lively in the discussion. All the Required Readings are available on Moodle as pdf files.

ii) Recommended Reading (list of readings per class and full bibliography available on Moodle)

iii) Basic knowledge of Ancient Greek

Class Field Work

There will be numerous outdoor activities, such as field tasks, visits to various archaeological sites and city walking. Ideally, as some of the visits are one off, you should carry with you your notebook and a pen/pencil, a photographic camera (be aware that in some museums and sites photography is not permitted) and your smile.

Evaluation and Grading

1) Attendance and participation (50%)

Students are expected to attend all classes, whether indoors or outdoors, and be prepared to actively participate, contribute and discuss the topics of the day, as well as offer their own thoughts and interpretations.

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons, which result in absences, should be reported immediately.

2) Two reflections based on the readings and the site/ museum visits (400 words each, total 30%). You are expected to submit a reflection based on the relevant bibliography, your own observations, and thoughts. Feel free to add illustrations, such as photos, drawing, plans, etc.

3) A group presentation (20%). You are expected to form a group of 2-3 course participants and to present (3-5 minutes per individual) on a relevant topic of your choice at any point during the course duration. At the end of the presentation, you should provide the instructors with a summary (ca. 100 words) of your research.

Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

The *Final Grade* is broken down as follows:

- Class attendance and participation: 50%
- Two reflections: 2x15%=30%
- Group presentation (& report): 20%

Total: 100%

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Rethymno or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the Student Affairs Office.

ePolicy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Class Schedule

| Class Day | Day/Date/Place | Topic / Readings / Assignments Due |
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| | Monday, Jan 4 Night in Athens | Student Arrivals Orientation Welcome Dinner |
| 1 | Tuesday, Jan 5 Class at CYA (Night in Athens) | AM: Introduction to the course. The Aegean and Crete in Prehistory. Chronology and Geography. Required reading Mee 2011: 1-7 |
| | Wednesday, Jan 6 (Night in Athens) | Free day |
| 2 | Thursday, Jan 7 Site of Akrotiri & Museum of Prehistoric Thera (Night at Fira Town) | AM: Flight to Thera Akrotiri: Pompeii of Prehistoric Aegean. Thera Arts and Administration. Required reading Doumas in Cline 2010: 752-761 |

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| 3 | Friday, Jan 8 Class at CYA Night in Athens | AM: Flight to Athens PM: The Archaeology of Prehistoric Crete. The 'palaces' and others. Required reading Bennet in Bang and Scheidel 2013: 235-243 |
| 4 | Saturday, Jan 9 (Night at Rethymno) | AM: Visit National Archaeological Museum, Athens PM: Arrival of the Students in Rethymno, Crete. |
| 5 | Sunday, Jan 10 Visit: Archaeological Museum at Rethymno Visit: Old Town (Rethymno) UoC, Room TBD (Night at Rethymno) | AM: Visit the Archaeological Museum at Rethymno (morning) Old town Rethymno (morning) PM: Orientation #1 Inscriptions in the Graeco-Roman world. A general introduction Required reading https://saxa-loquuntur.web.rug.nl/handbooks-introductions/ B.F. Cook, <i>Greek Inscriptions, London</i> , British Museum Publications, 1987. [A brief introduction on the basis of inscriptions in the British Museum] In https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_Kp806ShRDh8C/page/n11/mode/2up Recommended Reading B.H. McLean 2002. <i>An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great Down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.-A.D. 337)</i> , Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2002 #2 Epigraphic conventions, sigla, bibliography, Databases, Searching Greek inscriptions; Digital Epigraphy Required reading https://saxa-loquuntur.web.rug.nl/sigla-numerals-abbreviations/ https://saxa-loquuntur.web.rug.nl/abbreviations-of-corpora-and-publications/ |
| 6 | Monday, Jan 11 UoC, Room TBD (Night at Rethymno) | AM: #3 Hellenistic and Roman Epigraphy of Crete (Part 1: a general introduction) Required reading A. Chaniotis, "From Communal Spirit to Individuality. The Epigraphic Habit in Hellenistic and Roman Crete", in: A. Di Vita (ed.) <i>Creta Romana e Protobizantina: Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Iraklion, 23-20 settembre 2000</i> , Padua 2004, 75-87. #4 Hellenistic and Roman Epigraphy of Crete (Part 2: types of Greek inscriptions) PM: #5 Crete and Cretans abroad (inscriptions, papyri and ostraca) #6 Cretan and Crete in the ancient Greek proverbs |
| 7 | Thursday, Jan 12 TRIP 2 Visit: Archaeological Site of Knossos Visit: Archaeological Museum of Herakleion (Night at Rethymno) | AM: #7 The fascinating fiction of <i>Dictys Cretensis</i> Required reading R.M. Frazer, <i>The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian</i> , Indiana University Press, 1966, 7-11, 19-21 (borrow in https://archive.org/details/trojanwarchronic0000fraz/page/n9/mode/2up) Required reading P. Perlman, "Crete" in: M.H. Hansen – TH. Nielsen (ed.), <i>An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis</i> , Oxford 2004 #8 Practice: Discussing the Greek inscriptions of the Museum |
| 8 | Wednesday, Jan 13 TRIP 1 Visit: Gortyn (archaeological site) Visit: Museum Messaras (https://messaramuseum.gr/site/index-en.shtml) Visit: The "Small Labyrinth" at the vicinity of the village Plouti (Messara) (weather permitting) | AM: #9 The Gortyn Law Required reading R.F. Willetts, <i>The Law Code of Gortyn</i> , Berlin 1967. Download from anemi.lib.uoc.gr/metadata/1/metadata-204-0000000.tkl . M. Gagarin–P. Perlman, <i>The Laws of Ancient Crete c. 650-400 BCE</i> , Oxford 2016, 47-50 #10 Practice: Discussing the Greek inscriptions of the Museum #11 The myth of Labyrinth in Cretan mythology Required reading N. Litinas, "Looking for the Λαβύρινθος Exploring the Maze of Evidence", 10th IntCretCongr (Khania 2006) A5 (Khania 2011) 455-470. |

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| 9 | <p>Thursday, Jan 14 TRIP 3 Visit: village Achladè Visit: Melidoni cave Visit: The village of Margarites, and a pottery workshop Visit: Arkadi Monastery (https://www.arkadimonastery.gr/home.html) (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>#12 Religious practices in Crete from antiquity to nowadays #13 The cultural context of the caves and their inscriptions Required reading N. Litinas, <i>Inscriptions of the Cave Latsida ston Keramo</i>, Wien 2014, 1-2, 11-15, 34-39, 97-105) #14 Ostraca and texts on ceramics Required reading N. Litinas, <i>Greek Ostraca from Chersonesos</i>, Crete, Wien 2008, 25-39, 75-81. Free afternoon</p> |
| | <p>Friday, Jan 15 (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>Free day</p> |
| 10 | <p>Saturday, Jan 16 Visit: the village of Kyrianna, Rethymno (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>AM: #15 Olive Oil Production in Crete: From Antiquity to the Present (a) gather olives (b) visit an oil factory (c) visit church at Kyrianna village (bells) Free afternoon</p> |
| 11 | <p>Sunday Jan 17 TRIP 5 Visit: Aghios Antonios (small church in the cave near the entrance of Patsos gorge) on the day of the celebration of St. Anthony. (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>#16 Aspects of epigraphic habits from antiquity to nowadays Free afternoon</p> |
| 12 | <p>Monday, Jan 18 UoC, Room TBD (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>#17 Papyri in the Graeco-Roman world. A general introduction. #18 Papyrological conventions, sigla, bibliography, Databases, Searching Greek papyri; Digital Papyrology Required reading Roger S. Bagnall, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology</i>, Oxford 2009, 3-29 PM: Visit the UoC Library to view the <i>Papyri Universitatis Cretensis</i></p> |
| | <p>Tuesday, Jan 19</p> | <p>Free day</p> |
| 13 | <p>Wednesday, Jan 20 TRIP 6 Visit: Archaeological Museum of Chania Visit: Old Town of Chania (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>#19 Practice: Discussing the Greek inscriptions of the Museum PM: Study time</p> |
| 14 | <p>Thursday, Jan 21 Visit: Fortezza, Rethymnon (Night at Rethymno)</p> | <p>AM: #20 Practice: Documentation of inscriptions. Making squeezes of original inscriptions (permission granted by the Archaeological Service) PM: Study time</p> |
| 15 | <p>Friday, Jan 22</p> | <p>AM: Discussion and group presentations PM: Discussion and group presentations Coursework completion</p> |
| | <p>Saturday, Jan 23 (departures)</p> | <p>AM: Flight to Athens End of the course</p> |

N.B.: The course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and to keep up to date with current research.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (Required and Recommended)

Aegean prehistory

Bang, P.F. and W. Scheidel (eds.) 2013. *The Oxford handbook in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean*. Oxford University Press.

Cline, E. (2010) *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*. Oxford University Press.

Galanakis, I. (ed.) (2013) *The Aegean world: A guide to the Cycladic, Minoan and Mycenaean antiquities in the Ashmolean Museum*. Ashmolean & Kapon Editions.

Mee, C. (2011) *Greek Archaeology. A Thematic Approach*. Wiley-Blackwell.

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IC: Margarita Guarducci (curavit), *Inscriptiones Creticae. Opera et Consilio Friderici Halbherr Collectae*, R. Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Roma, 1935-1950.

ICI: Tituli Cretae Mediae Praeter Gortynios, 1935; ICII: Tituli Cretae Occidentalis, 1939; ICIII: Tituli Cretae Orientalis, 1942; ICIV: Tituli Gortynii, 1950. Download from <<https://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/metadata/2/2/0/metadata-203-0000001.tkl>>

Bagnall, R.S. (2009) *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*. Oxford.

Chaniotis, A. (1999) "Milking the Mountains. Economic Activities on the Cretan Uplands in the Classical and Hellenistic Period", in: A. Chaniotis (ed.), *From Minoan Farmers to Roman Traders. Sidelights on the Economy of Ancient Crete*. Stuttgart. 181-220.

Chaniotis, A. (2008) "What difference did Rome make? The Cretans and the Roman Empire", in: B. Forsén – G. Samleri (eds.), *The province Strikes Back: Imperial Dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Helsinki: The Finish Institute at Athens. 83-105.

Cook, B.F. (1987) *Greek Inscriptions*. London, British Museum Publications. [A brief introduction on the basis of inscriptions in the British Museum] In https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_Kp806ShRDh8C/page/n11/mode/2up

Francis, J. and M.J. Curtis (eds.) (2022) *Change and transition on Crete interpreting the evidence from the Hellenistic through to the early Byzantine period*. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology.

Francis, J. and A. Kouremenos (eds.) (2016) *Roman Crete: New Perspectives*. Oxford. i-vi, 1-9, 235-238.

Frazer, R.M. (1966) *The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*. Indiana University Press. (borrow in <https://archive.org/details/trojanwarchronic0000fraz/page/n9/mode/2up>).

Gagarin, M. and P.J. Perlman (2016). *The Laws of Ancient Crete c. 650-400 BCE*, Oxford.

Harrison, G.W.M. (1993) *The Romans and Crete*. Amsterdam.

Kouremenos, A. (2018) "In the Heart of the Wine-Dark Sea: Cretan Insularity and Identity in the Roman Period", in: A. Kouremenos (ed.) *Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*. Oxford. 41-64.

Litinas, N. (2011) "Looking for the Λαβύρινθος Exploring the Maze of Evidence", 10th IntCretCongr (Khania 2006) A5 (Khania 2011) 455-470.

Litinas, N. (2014) *Inscriptions of the Cave Latsida ston Keramo*. Wien 2014.

McLean, B.H. (2002) *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great Down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.-A.D. 337)*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Perlman, P. (2004) "Crete" in: M.H. Hansen – Th. Nielsen (eds.), *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*. Oxford.

Sanders, I.F. (1982) *Roman Crete. An Archaeological Survey and Gazetteer of Late Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Crete*. Warminster.

Talbert, R.J.A. (ed.) (2001) *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*. Princeton University Press.

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van Minnen, P. (2007) "The Millennium of Papyrology (2001-?)", in: B. Palme (ed.), *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Wien, 22.—28. Juli 2001*. Pap.Vind. 1, Vienna. 703-714.

Willetts, R.F. (1967) *The Law Code of Gortyn*. Berlin. Download from <anemi.lib.uoc.gr/metadata/204-0000000.tkl>.

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<https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist.html>

<http://web.philo.ulg.ac.be/cedopal/base-de-donnees-mp3/>

<https://papyri.info/>

http://www.aere-egke.be/BP_enligne.htm

<https://www.trismegistos.org/index.php>

<https://www2.ulb.ac.be/assoc/aip/index.html>