

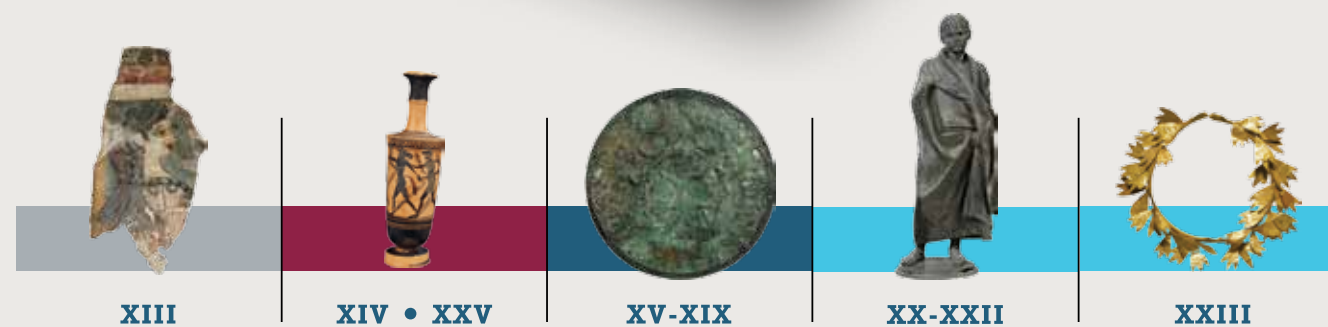
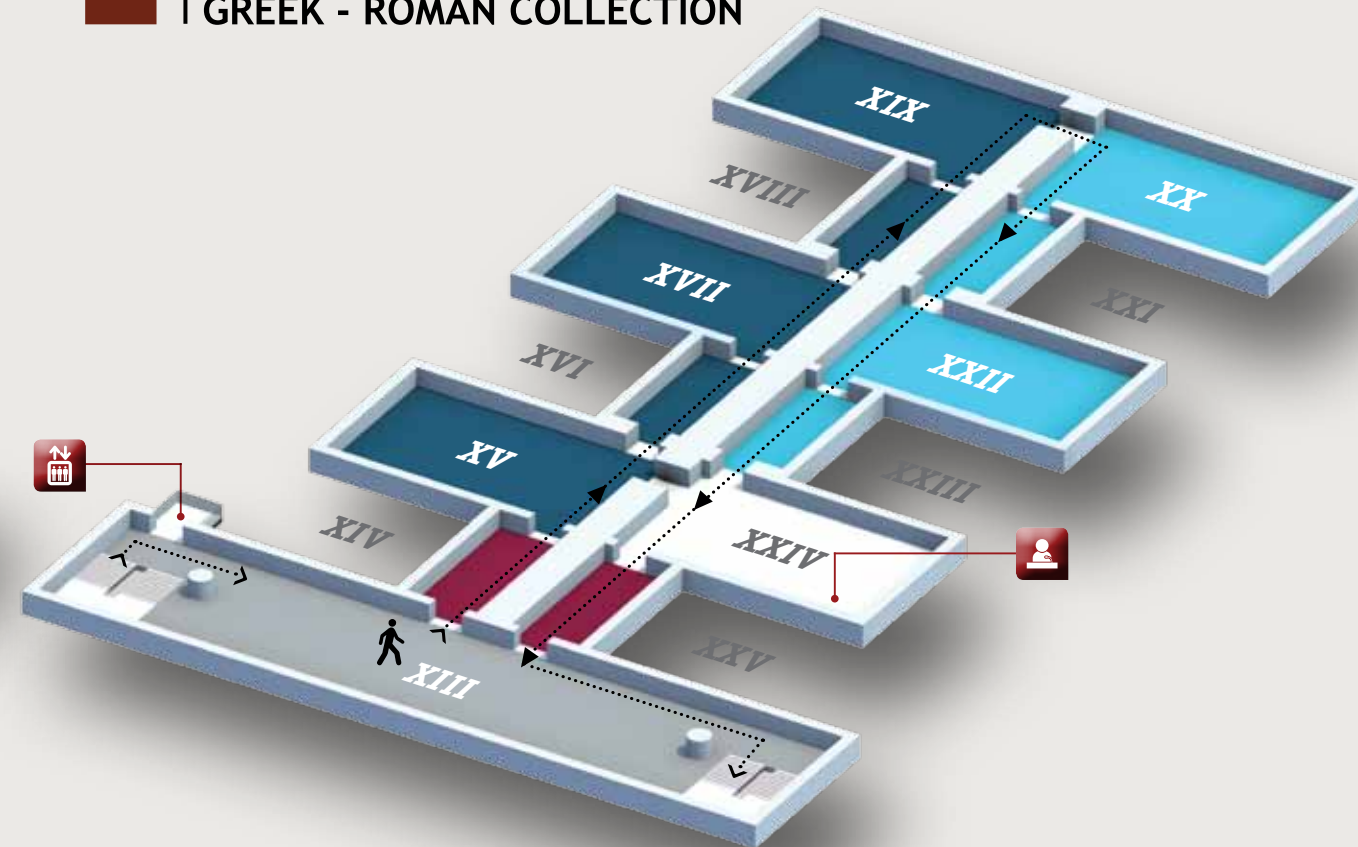
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GROUND FLOOR

MINOAN COLLECTION
SCULPTURE

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FIRST FLOOR

MINOAN FRESCOES
GREEK - ROMAN COLLECTION

Eleftherias Square, Heraklion, beginning of the 20th century with the first Archaeological Museum at the center and the monastery of St Francis on the right.

The Heraklion Archaeological Museum was founded at the turn of the 20th century to house the first Cretan Antiquities Collection. It was rebuilt in the 1930s to plans by architect P. Karantinos and met acclaim as a groundbreaking example of modernist architecture. Extensive restoration work began in 2001 and was completed in 2014.

The exhibition is laid out in 27 rooms on the ground and first floors, displaying archaeological finds from Neolithic to Roman times (6th millennium BC – 3rd cent. AD). The Heraklion Archaeological Museum, however, is world famous for the masterpieces of Minoan art comprising its Prehistoric Collection.

In the Museum garden are preserved the architectural remains of the Venetian monastery of St Francis.

Visiting hours: <http://heraklionmuseum.gr/>



Archaeological Museum of Heraklion
Xanthoudidou 2, 71202 Heraklion
Tel. 2810 / 279002 - 279000,
<http://heraklionmuseum.gr/>
e-mail: amh@culture.gr



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM OF HERAKLION



THE NEW EXHIBITION

MUSEUM ITINERARY

The exhibition itinerary starts on the ground floor with the Minoan Collection (Rooms I-XII), continues to the first floor with the Minoan frescoes (Room XIII) and the historic period (Rooms XV-XXII) and ends back on the ground floor with the Sculpture Collection (Rooms XXVI-XXVII). The private collections of S. Giamalakis and N. Th. Metaxas are presented in a separate section on the first floor (Room XXIII), as is the reflected influence of the Minoan past of Crete in ancient and modern times (Rooms XIV, XXV).

Rooms I and II house exhibits representative of Neolithic life and the Early Bronze Age on Crete (6000-1900 BC). Pottery and luxury objects from the Neolithic settlement of Knossos and the Prepalatial tholos tombs of the Mesara, as well as the burial complexes of Malia, Mochlos and Archanes are presented. Exhibits such as the famous gold bee pendant from Malia testify to the refined Minoan taste. Aspects of worship are highlighted by the votive offerings of clay figurines from peak sanctuaries.

In Room III are presented aspects of life, economy and administration at the foundation of the first palaces of Knossos, Phaistos and Malia (1900-1700 BC). In pride of place are clay vases of the polychrome Kamares Ware, the most representative example being the “royal dinner service” of Phaistos.

Rooms IV and V highlight the consolidation of the palatial system with the construction of the new palaces and villas (1700-1450 BC), together with the development of maritime trade. One of the most important exhibits, the Phaistos Disc, is the earliest known example of a Minoan text, probably of a religious nature.

Room VI is dedicated to daily life, sports and spectacles in general. Famous works, such as the ivory bull-leaper figurine and the Bull-leaping Fresco from the palace of Knossos, the Malia sword and the stone rhyton from Haghia Triada, reflect the tastes of Minoan society.

In Rooms VII and VIII Minoan religion comes to the fore. Figurines and ritual vessels from peak sanctuaries, the bull’s-head rhyton, the famous “Snake Goddesses” from the Temple Repositories at the palace of Knossos, the stone ritual vessels from the palace of Zakros and the gold signet rings with epiphany scenes, all make up the cycle of worship.

Room IX presents the final phase of use of the palace of Knossos (1450-1300 BC) together with finds from the local cemeteries and Kamilaris Phaistos, dating from 1900 until 1300 BC. A special place is accorded to the clay tables with Greek Linear B script, which provide information on the palatial administration and economy.

Finds from the tombs of the illustrious dead in the cemeteries



of Knossos, Archanes and Phaistos, mainly from the Final Palace phase, are also displayed in the adjoining Room X, while Room XI houses finds from settlements, sanctuaries and cemeteries of the period following the collapse of the palatial system. Of particular interest are the large clay figurines of goddesses with upraised arms from Kannia Gortys and Gazi.

Passing through Room XII, dedicated to the world of the dead and afterlife beliefs, as reflected at depictions on larnakes, the itinerary leads to the first floor of the Museum, to the spacious Room XIII, where the Minoan frescoes are displayed. Famous works inspired by the life of the court and the world of nature include the “Prince of the Lilies”, the “Cupbearer”, the “Ladies in Blue”, “La Parisienne” and the “Dolphin Fresco”.

There follows the display of ancient works of the historic period. Rooms XV-XVII present Cretan society during the Early Iron Age. Everyday life, state organisation with the enactment and recording of the first laws, the flourishing trade in the Mediterranean basin favouring cultural contacts between neighbouring peoples, all illustrate the particular character of Cretan society at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Votive offerings from the great, long-lived sanctuaries of the period, such as Syme Viannos and Gortys, as well as from sacred caves like the Idaean,

the Dictaeon and the cave of Inatos, are also exhibited.

The cemeteries of the early historic centuries are presented in Rooms XVIII-XIX, with particular emphasis on the grave stelai of Prinias. A separate exhibition unit is devoted to the creation of the Greek alphabet through the earliest surviving inscriptions in Crete.

Room XX covers the Cretan city-states and their sanctuaries from the Classical to the Roman period (5th cent. BC - 3rd cent. AD), while the small Room XXI showcases the evolution of Cretan coinage. The tour of the first floor concludes with the cemeteries of the Hellenistic and Roman periods in Room XXII. Burial offerings from the cemeteries of Knossos and Hersonissos, together with the unique bronze funerary statue from Ierapetra, make up the landscape of death in those times.

Returning to the ground floor, visitors can tour Rooms XXVI and XXVII, housing the Sculpture Collection. A series of architectural reliefs from Gortys and the temple of Prinias highlight the contribution of Crete to the development of Greek monumental sculpture, while Roman portraits and copies of known statue types of Classical antiquity reveal the flourishing of art during the Roman period.

