

# The Birth of Greece



Pierre Lévêque is a professor of Greek history at the Université de Franche-Comté, in Besançon. In addition to his scholarly histories of Greece, he has published several popular surveys of ancient Greek culture as well as guidebooks to Greece and Sicily. His most recent published works are about the history of religion.

*To the memory of Aléka  
and of Jenny  
and for all Greek friends*

Translated from the French by Anthony Zielonka

Project Manager: Sharon AvRutick  
Typographic Designer: Elissa Ichiyasu  
Editor: Russell M. Stockman  
Assistant Editor: Jennifer Stockman  
Design Assistants: Penelope Hardy and Miko McGinty  
Text Permissions: Neil Ryder Hoos

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 93-72816

ISBN 0-8109-2843-4

Copyright © 1990 Gallimard

English translation copyright © 1994 Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York,  
and Thames and Hudson Ltd., London

Published in 1994 by Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York

All rights reserved. No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced  
without the written permission of the publisher

Printed and bound in Italy by Editoriale Lloyd, Trieste

• Knossus in all its manifestations suggests the splendor and sanity and opulence of a powerful and peaceful people. It is gay – gay, healthful, sanitary, salubrious.... One feels the influence of Egypt, the homely human immediacy of the Etruscan world, the wise, communal organizing spirit of Inca days. I do not pretend to know, but I felt, as I have seldom felt before the ruins of the past, that here throughout long centuries there reigned an era of peace. there is something down to earth about Knossus.... The religious note seems to be graciously diminished;...a spirit of play is markedly noticeable.... One feels that man lived to live, that he was not plagued by thoughts of a life beyond, that he was not smothered and restricted by undue reverence for the ancestral spirits, that he was religious in the only way which is becoming to man, by making the most of everything that comes to hand, by extracting the utmost of life from every passing minute. •

Henry Miller  
*The Colossus of Maroussi*, 1941

## Selected DISCOVERIES® titles

### **The Ancient World**

Easter Island: Mystery of the Stone Giants  
The Search for Ancient Egypt  
The Search for Ancient Greece  
The Search for Ancient Rome  
The Incas: People of the Sun  
Aztecs: Rise and Fall of an Empire  
The Celts: Conquerors of Ancient Europe  
Cleopatra: The Life and Death of a Pharaoh  
Pompeii: The Day a City Died

### **Literature and Film**

The Age of Shakespeare  
Charlie Chaplin: Comic Genius  
Birth of the Motion Picture

### **Art and Music**

Matisse: The Wonder of Color  
Monet: The Ultimate Impressionist  
Mozart: From Child Prodigy to Tragic Hero  
Picasso: Master of the New Idea  
Rembrandt: Master of the Portrait  
Renoir: A Sensuous Vision  
The Story of Jazz: Bop and Beyond  
Van Gogh: The Passionate Eye

### **Legend, Folklore, and Traditions**

Writing: The Story of Alphabets and Scripts  
Vampires: Restless Creatures of the Night  
Voodoo: Search for the Spirit  
Mummies: A Voyage Through Eternity  
Heraldry: An Introduction to a Noble Tradition

### **Science and the Environment**

Numbers: The Universal Language  
The Sky: Mystery, Magic, and Myth  
Fossils: Evidence of Vanished Worlds  
The Reign of the Dinosaurs  
North Pole, South Pole: Journeys to the Ends of the Earth  
Weather: Drama of the Heavens  
The Amazon: Past, Present, and Future

### **History and Religion**

D-Day and the Invasion of Normandy  
The Wisdom of the Buddha  
Cathedrals and Castles: Building in the Middle Ages  
The Irish Famine  
The Crusaders: Warriors of God  
The Vikings: Lords of the Seas

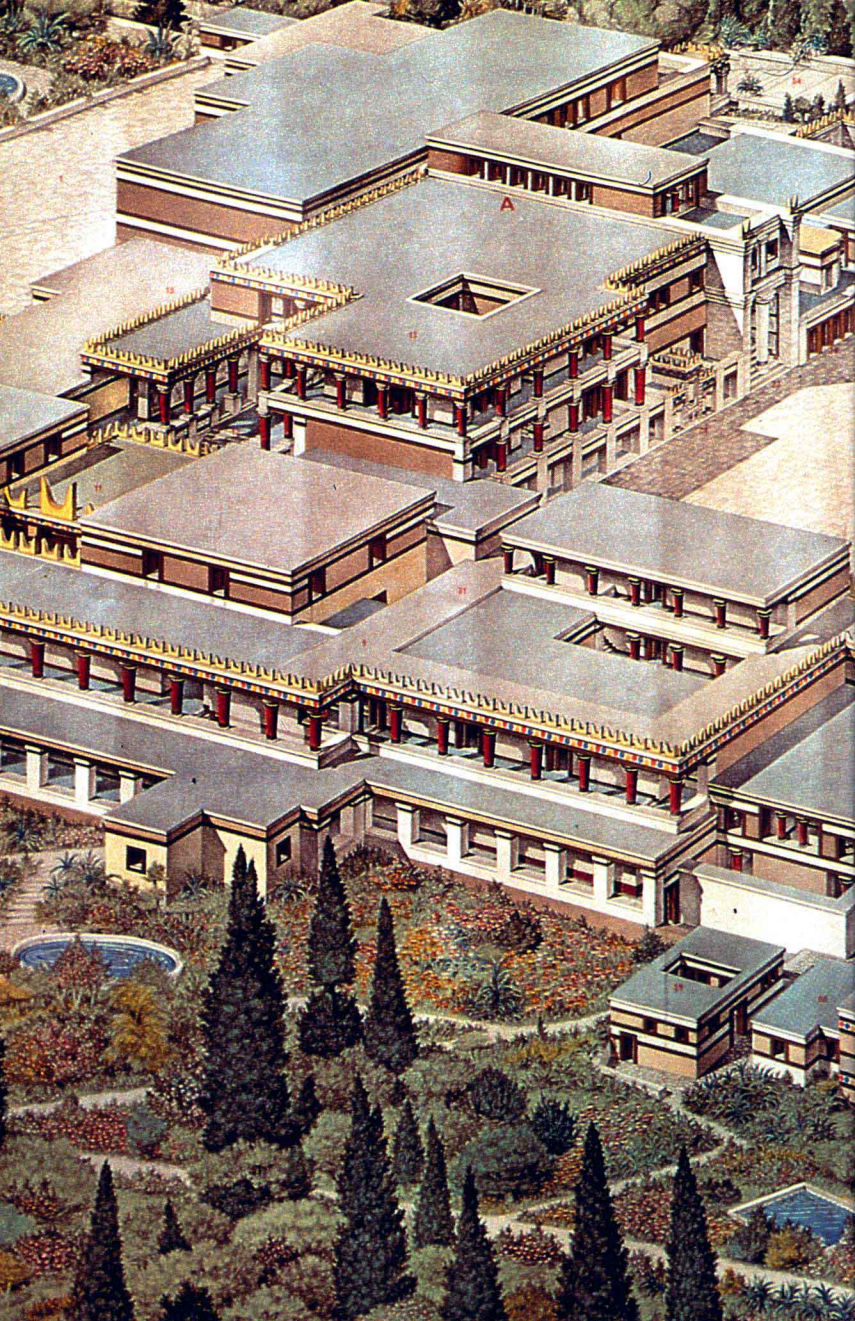
There are more than 75 books in the DISCOVERIES® series.  
For a complete list, please contact the Sales Department:



Harry N. Abrams, Inc.  
100 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
[www.abramsbooks.com](http://www.abramsbooks.com)



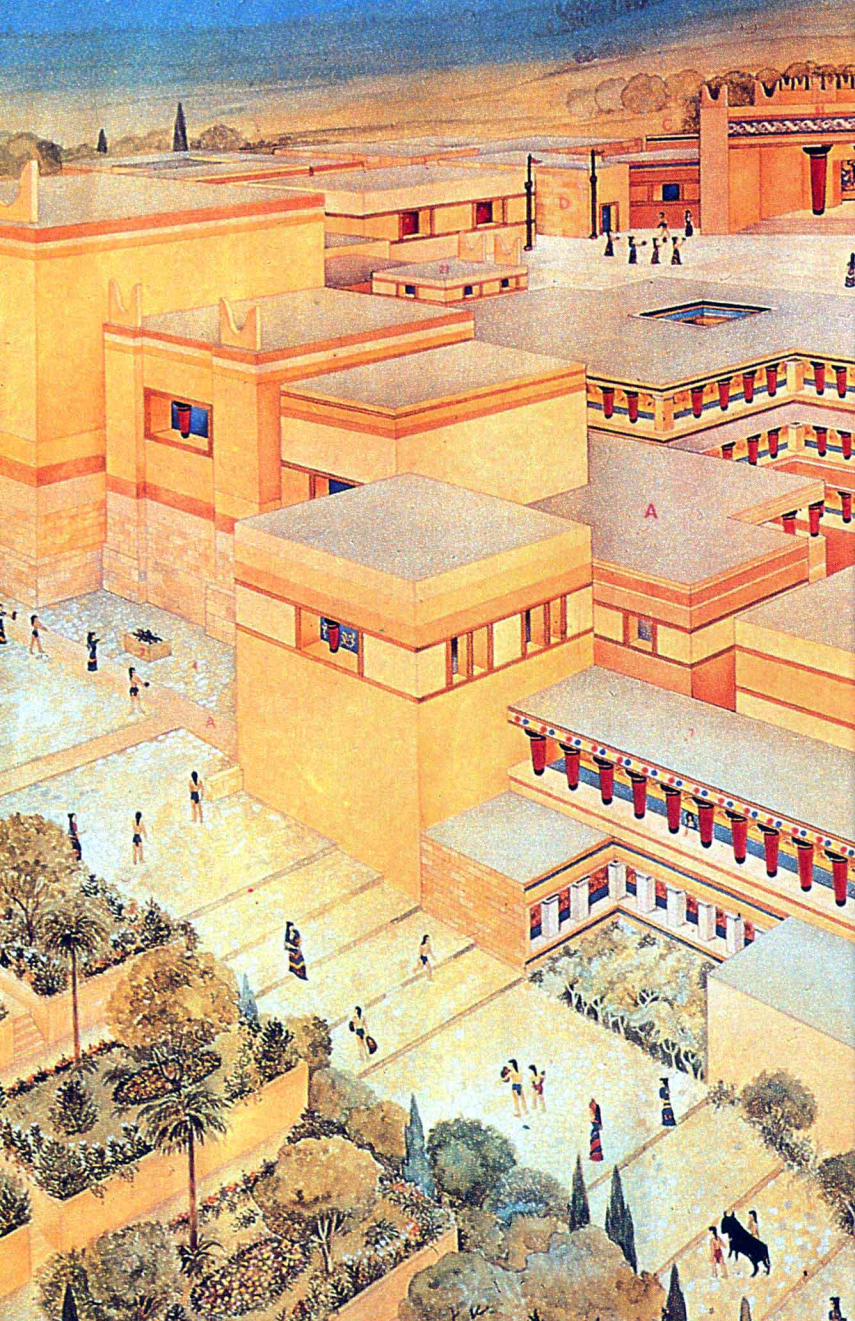




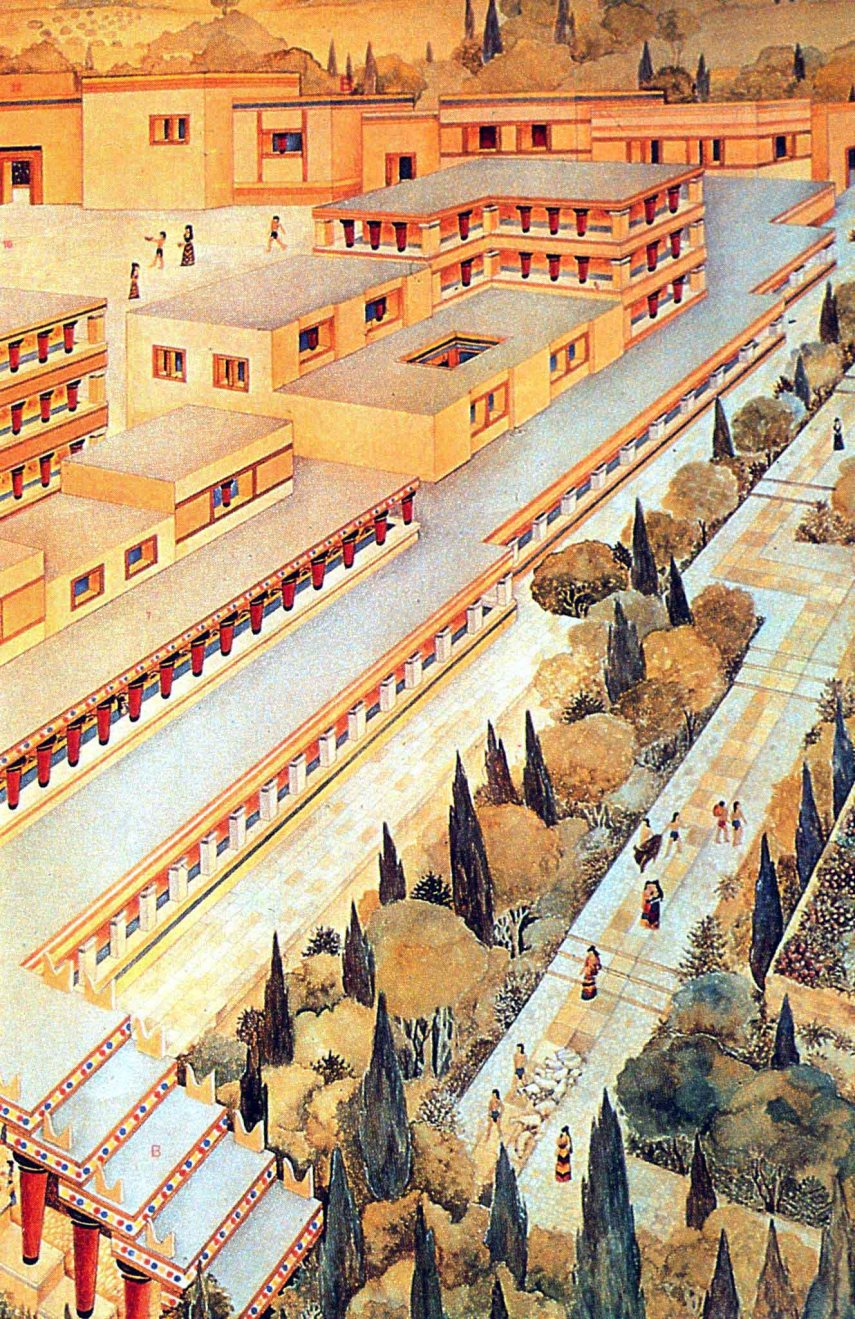






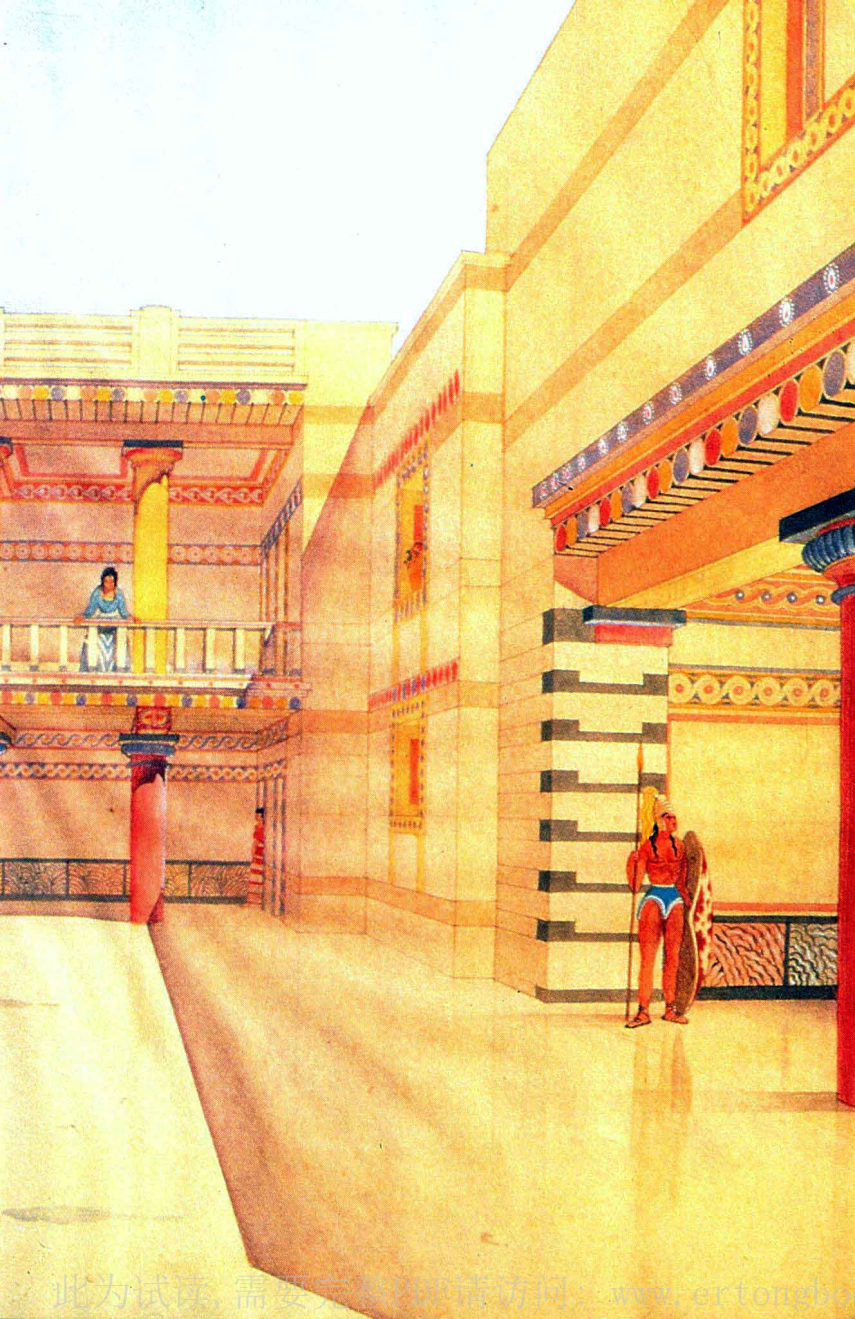




















# CONTENTS

## I A SUMPTUOUS AGE OF BRONZE

13

## II THE ARCHAIC PERIOD: AN AGE OF SIMMERING CREATIVITY

47

## III THE CLASSICAL BALANCE: REALITY AND UTOPIANISM

89

## DOCUMENTS

129

### Chronology

168

### Further Reading

169

### List of Illustrations

170

### Index

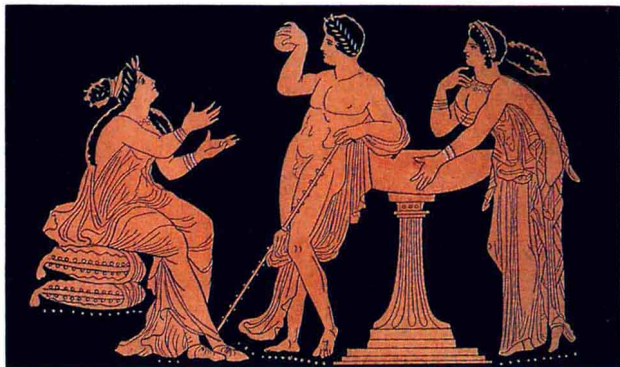
173



---

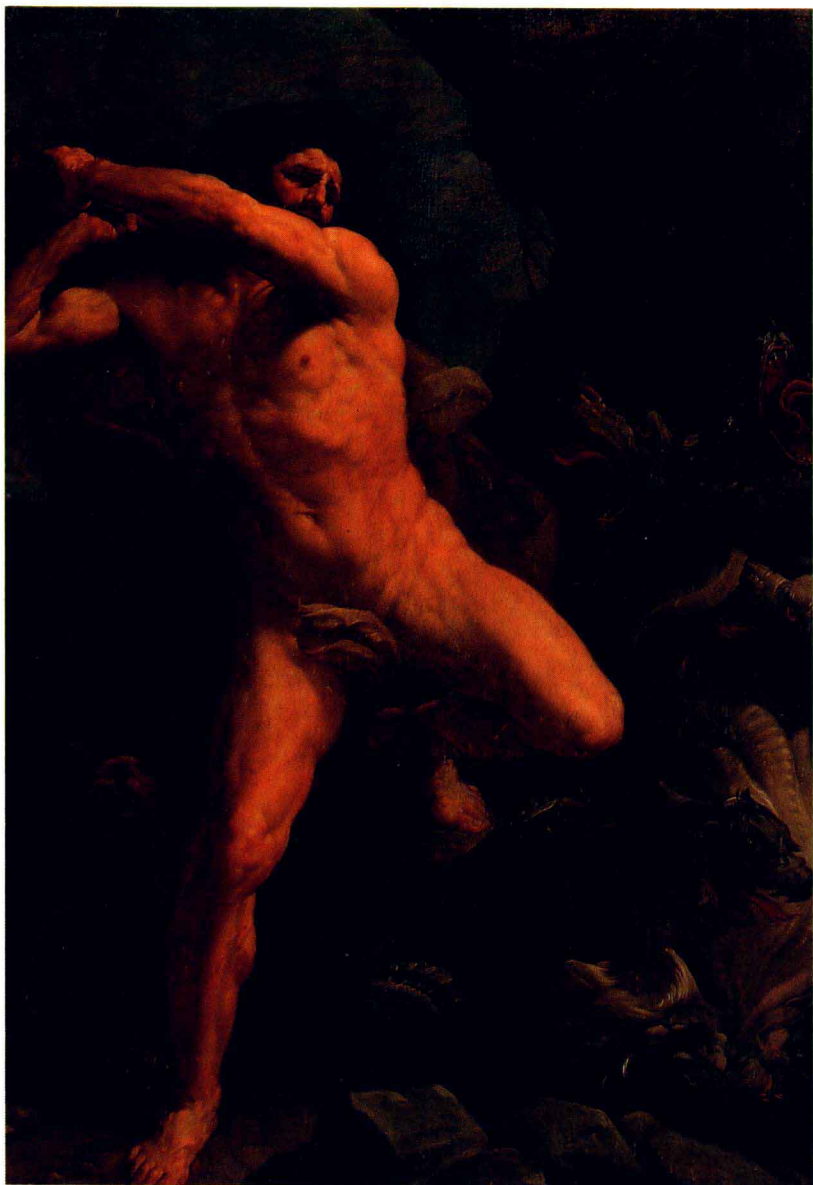
# THE BIRTH OF GREECE

Pierre Lévêque



DISCOVERIES

HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC., PUBLISHERS



Shortly after the arrival of the first Greek-speaking peoples, in about 2000 BC, a highly sophisticated civilization arose in mainland Greece. In time magnificent fortified palaces and rich tombs would bear witness to the new culture's development, which culminated during the reign of the kings of Mycenae in the 16th–14th centuries BC and ended with the invasion of the Dorians—another Greek-speaking tribe from the north—in the late 11th century BC.

## CHAPTER I

### A SUMPTUOUS AGE OF BRONZE

Strength and movement  
in a hero and a god: The  
celebrated Greek hero  
Heracles (opposite) and  
Zeus (right), the supreme  
Greek god, were given the  
task of reestablishing order  
in a world disrupted by the  
forces of chaos.

