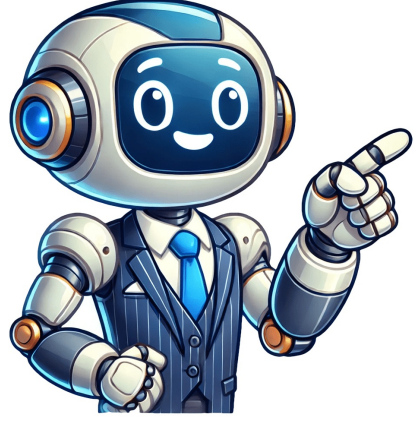


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Phaistos and Knossos were constructed, and also during the Neopalatial period (1650-1425 BCE). Minoan pottery was highly sought after throughout the Mediterranean. Mycenaean art, which replaced Minoan culture after Crete was overrun by the Mycenaeans, around 1400 BCE, proved lacklustre. Then in the 12th century BCE, Greece was occupied by invading tribes from the North, which led to the collapse of arts and crafts in most areas of the country. The resurgence of Greek art began about 900 BCE, with the appearance of Geometric Style Greek pottery (c.900-725 BCE), which produced some of the finest works of Greek ceramic art. This was followed from about 725 onwards, by the Oriental Style of Greek pottery (c.725-600 BCE), influenced by Greek colonies in Asia Minor. On the Greek mainland the two major centres of pottery were Athens and Corinth, whose rivalry affected developments across the board. The high point of Greek pottery occurred during the period 600-480 BCE, with the development of "black figure" pottery - in which designs were painted in black onto red clay vases - followed by "red figure" pottery in which the undesigned area was filled in with black paint, to contrast with the incised designs coloured in red. See also: Greek Sculpture (from 650 BCE). Except for the White Ground technique, Greek pottery during the Classical Period (c.480-330 BCE) proved to be an anti-climax. The medium was becoming stale with fewer opportunities for experimentation. Greek ceramic art fell away in both technique and creative merit, sustained only by a number of regional styles in the colonies, although Hellenistic pottery and painting continued to exert a major influence over emerging ceramic centres of Etruscan art, and on Roman art until the Imperial era. Developments in Chinese Pottery (2000 BCE - 200 CE) Xia Dynasty culture (2100-1600 BCE), from the first Iron Age dynasty in China, is noted for its white pottery sometimes decorated with turquoise and seashells. The earliest high-fired stoneware pots were made in China, during the period of Shang dynasty art (1700-1050 BCE), at sites like Yinxu and Erligang. Chinese master potters continued to refine high-temperature methods, along with different types of clays, until eventually they developed true porcelain. Shang ceramicists also made notable advances in high-fired glazes. During the following era of Zhou Dynasty Art (1050-221 BCE) the variety of ceramic objects was greatly extended, and production techniques were enhanced. In pottery centres along the valley of the lower Yangtze River, a porcellaneous stoneware was produced - a forerunner of the celadon glaze developed later by Tang dynasty potters. Han Dynasty Art (206 BCE - 220 CE) was responsible for two sorts of glazed ware. In the north, a bottle-green, low-fired lead glaze was produced; in the eastern Zhejiang region, a high-temperature brownish-olive glaze was made. In addition to advances in porcelain and high-fired ceramics, the period 2000 BCE-200 CE in China saw advances across the board in the manufacture of ceramic pottery, including: firing methods and kiln technology; the creation and use of slips and glazes at varying temperatures; the use and development of various types of mineral pigments; and an increase in the range of ceramic vessels, notably in the area of ceremonial and funerary vessels. For more about China's mastery of clay-fired terracotta technology, see: Chinese Terracotta Army (c.246-208 BCE). FOR MORE ABOUT ANCIENT ART, BROWSE OUR A-Z INDEX OF PREHISTORIC ART

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