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The Minoan Thalassocracy

Kristin Zavislak
Illinois Wesleyan University

Nancy Sultan, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Oral Presentation O4.3

THE MINOAN THALASSOCRACY

Kristin Zavislak and Nancy Sultan*

Greek and Roman Studies Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

A topic of frequent debate among archaeologists and historians of ancient Aegean civilizations is what accounted for the social, economic, and political changes that necessitated the development of palatial complexes on Crete in the MMIB period (c. 1900 BCE) and whether or not these changes are attributed to a politically controlled sea-trading empire centered at Knossos, a so-called “Minoan Thalassocracy.” Following the scholarly theories of Colin Renfrew and Sinclair Hood, I believe that there was indeed a state-run trading monopoly controlled by the Minoans that was able to thrive and dominate until its sudden demise in 1365 BCE through a combination of commercial imperialism and military dominance. Through evidence of strategically located, Minoan-run colonies along major trade routes and clear Minoan influence on architecture and pottery styles at these locations, I will prove that the Minoans traveled throughout the Aegean and had a profound impact upon the material, social, and political culture of every civilization they came into contact with. Also, with evidence of Minoan-manufactured weaponry, the architecture of the palace/ redistribution centers, and frescoes, I will show how the Minoans were not necessarily as peaceful as historians and archaeologists assume them to be.