

# LABYRINTHS

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AMAZING MAIZE MAZE!



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## SUMMARY

1. MEANING
2. ELEMENTS
3. TYPOLOGY
4. HISTORY
5. LOCATION





## 1. MEANING

From the very beginning, labyrinths were *related to a religious sense of the space*.

We can find some parallelisms with the *uses of caves* on prehistoric and ancient ages.

Getting into the labyrinth would be like getting into a cave. Those who are able to exit safe and sound, are protected.



Knossos palace was a sacred compound. It was called 'the house of the double axe' or *labrys*. It is thought that this term is in the origin of the word labyrinth (etymological root).

But axe in ancient Greek is *pelekis*; so we could say that *labrys* derives from the asianic *labra/laura*: stone, grotto.

Maybe the first labyrinths were subterranean quarries carved by human hands.

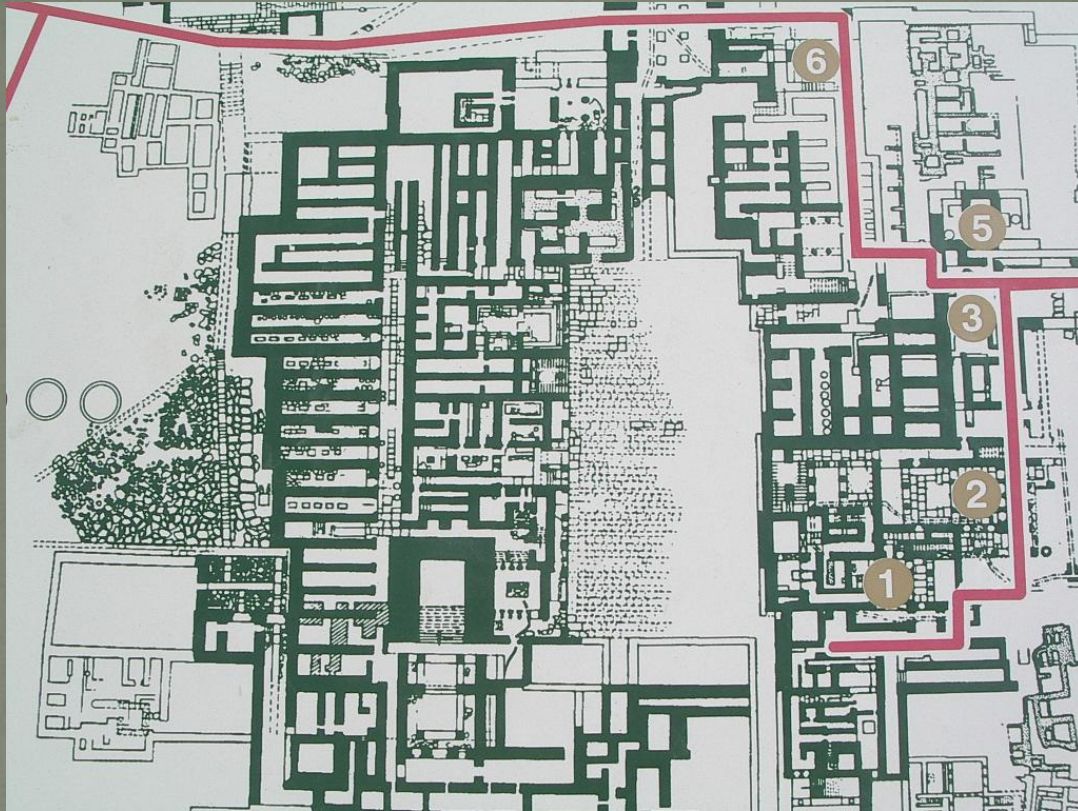
## EXPLORE

Look for the story of Theseus and the minotaur. Focus on the labyrinth, when he enter into it and kill the monster.

You can see a good short movie about Picasso and the minotaur in Youtube:

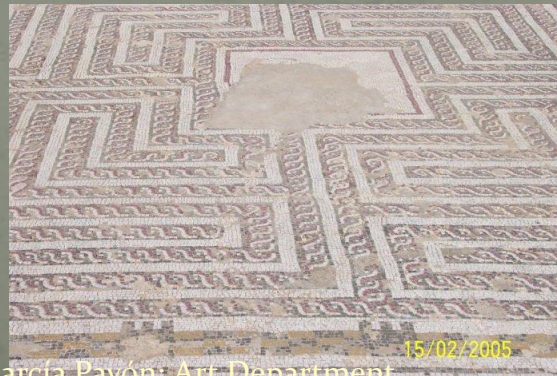
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtHBQCdG6sE>





## KNOSOS PALACE

On an open space in front of the palace we can see a labyrinthic drawing that was used as guide for ritual dances (the partridge dances).

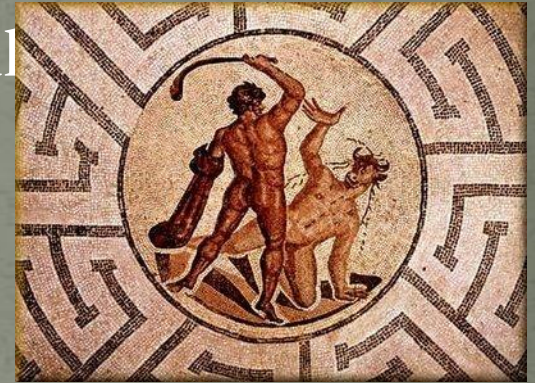




Dancing is one of the most important rituals all over the world. In those moments humans take control of time (with the rhythm) and the surrounding space at the same time she/he keeps on balance.

Connected to labyrinths, we find the spiral dancing, very popular during the XIX century.

Girls and boys danced to the centre to get separated later.



Most of the European dances that are still alive and that are related to warrens, descend from *geranos*, the dance that Theseus and his friends made once they were out of the labyrinth.



## Ditton Manor and Hampton Court Palace.

English labyrinths made from the grass are called mazes as well as 'city of Troy' (in Wales it is said caer-doia).



Those muddles derive from an ancient Roman game called 'Game of Troy', where aristocrat young men had to dance to honour Eneas (Augusto's ancestor).



Every city (with some importance) has a centre that gives it unity and sense of space. We could say that this centre is like the centre of the universe that put into order the chaos.

In the ancient Greece they made a labyrinth drawing on the floor and then they danced the choros. It was the birth of the city.

In ancient Rome, people draw labyrinths at the bottom of the walls to protect the city. It was said that bad spirits couldn't get out of them.

### **Dedalus**

Who was him?

Did you know that he invented (according to the ancient Greeks) the sail, the labyrinth, the dance called *choros*, the city and the walls?



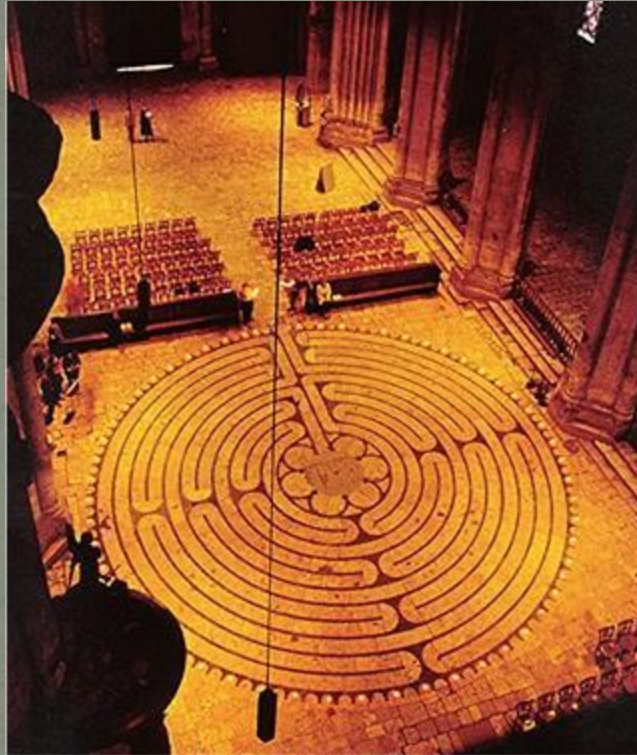
To think about:

- How do you use the word labyrinth?
- What is the meaning of 'getting lost in a labyrinth'?
- Could you think about things that could be a labyrinth?

## *Mazes and literature*

*Jorge Luis Borges has been the writer who had worked about this topic more intensively.*

*He compares a library with a warren, and creates the impossible labyrinth, only possible in our imagination.*



## 2. ELEMENTS

Almost every labyrinth has:

A- an entrance

B- an exit

C- a centre (there are ones with no centre)

D- a pathway

Could you sign these elements on the photo?





### 3. TYPOLOGY

A- **CLASSICAL** or one-path way.

B- **MAZES**: you can choose the way you go.

C- **CONTEMPORARY** with no centre.

*Identify the different typologies of these labyrinths.*



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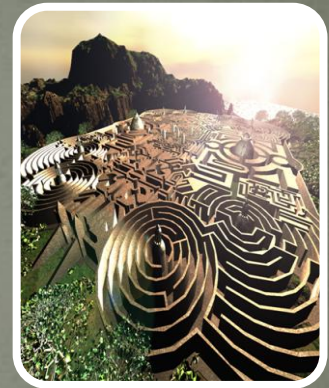
## 4. HISTORY

Complete this time line with more information and some photographs.





## 5. LOCATION



ANCIENT  
GREEK

Coins

Nobody has  
ever found a  
labyrinth,  
only on coins  
or drawings.

ANCIENT  
ROME

Mosaics

UNITED  
KINGDOM

Gardens

MIND

Think on your  
brain and  
your  
thoughts,  
your feelings  
and your  
memories...  
You will  
understand  
Borges.

THE NET

[www.mazes.org.uk](http://www.mazes.org.uk)  
[www.onebillionmazes.com](http://www.onebillionmazes.com)

# AND NOW...

MAKE UP A LABYRINTH USING  
GEOMETRICAL DRAWING.  
YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO MAKE:

- *Parallel lines*
- *Perpendicular lines*
- *Links*

*Once you  
have  
finished,  
use charcoal  
to create  
your own  
'minotaur'.*