

## The City of Heraklion

Heraklion, or Iraklion (Greek: Ηράκλειο Greek pronunciation: [iˈraklio]) is the largest city and the administrative capital of the island of Crete, Greece. It is the 4th largest city in Greece.

Heraklion is the capital of Heraklion regional unit. The ruins of Knossos, which were excavated and restored by Arthur Evans, are nearby. The Heraklion International Airport is named after Nikos Kazantzakis.

The Arab raiders from Andalusia who founded the Emirate of Crete moved the island's capital from Gortyna to what a new castle they called *rabḍ al-ḥandaq* 'Castle of the Moat' in the 820s. This was hellenized as Χάνδαξ (*Handax*) or Χάνδακας and Latinized as *Candia*, which was taken into other European languages: in Italian as *Candia* (used under the Venetian rule), in French as *Candie*, in English as *Candy*, all of which could refer to all of Crete as well as to the city itself; the Ottoman name was *Kandiye*.

After the Byzantine reconquest, the city was locally known as Megalo Kastro or Castro (the Big Castle in Greek) and its inhabitants were called Kastrinoi or Castrini (Castle-dwellers in Greek).

The ancient name Ηράκλειον was revived in the 19th century and comes from the nearby Roman port of Heracleum ("Heracles' city"), whose exact location is unknown. English usage formerly preferred the classicizing transliterations "Heraklion" or "Heraclion", but the form "Iraklion" is becoming more common.