

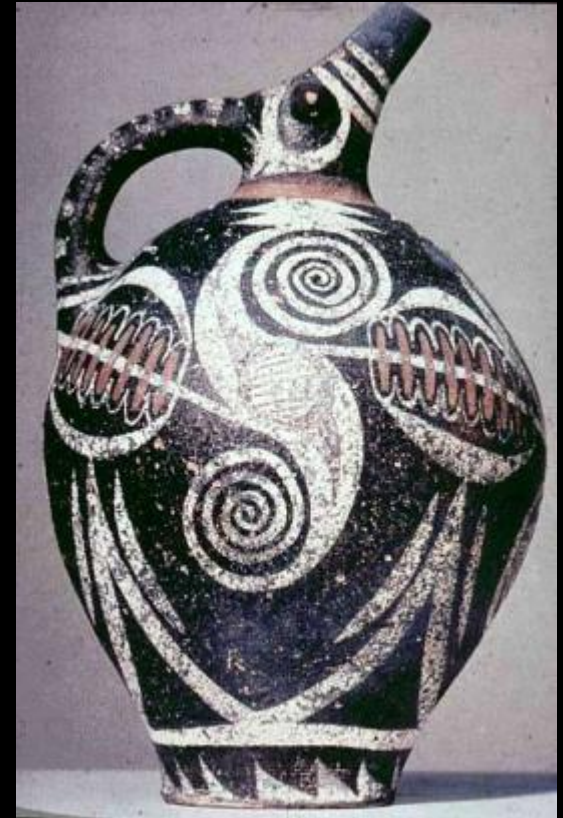
The Palaces of Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece



HPAR4005

Minoan Crete: Chronology

- c.3000-1900 BC:
 - Early Minoan I-Middle Minoan IA
 - Prepalatial Period
- 1900-1700 BC:
 - Middle Minoan IB-Middle Minoan IIIA
 - Old Palace Period / Proto-Palatial Period
- 1700-1425 [1500 BC]
 - Middle Minoan IIB-Late Minoan IB
 - New Palace Period / Palatial Period



Kamares ware jug

Main Palace Sites

MINOAN CRETE



Appearance of the Palaces

- Internal development:
 - Gradual, steady development of technology throughout Prepalatial period
 - Steady increase in population
 - Inexorable process
- Sudden change:
 - Influences from the Near East
 - Secondary state formation



Knossos, aerial view of palace

Palaces

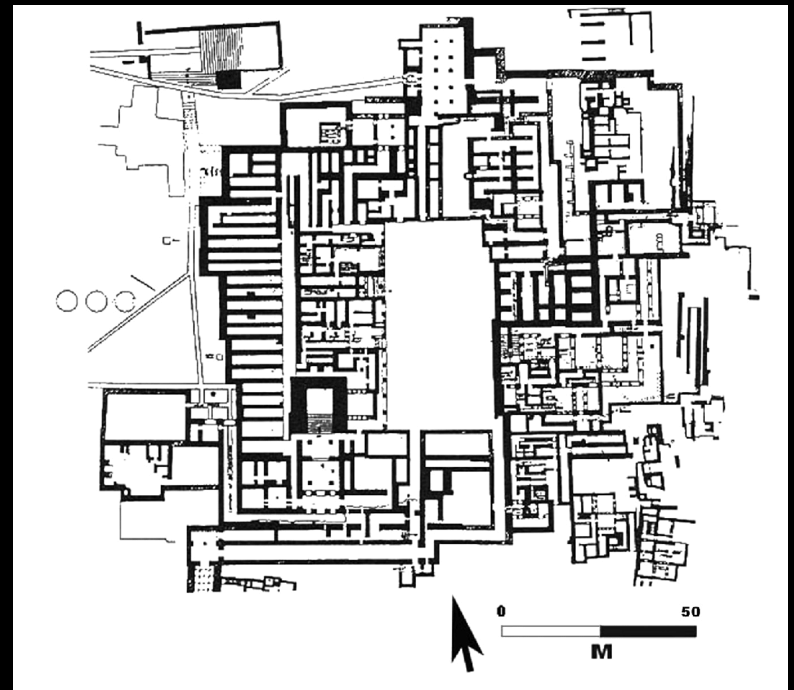
- What were the palaces?
- Monumental structures
- Focal point of large towns
- A palace is a large central building, which uses repeated architectural elements & formulae to create **ceremonial space** (Day & Wilson 1998)



Phaistos

The Minoan Palace

- All the palaces share same basic ground plan
- Clearly defined use of space:
 - Ground floor: economic functions (storage & work rooms)
 - Upper floors: residential & reception rooms



Knossos

Architectural Elements

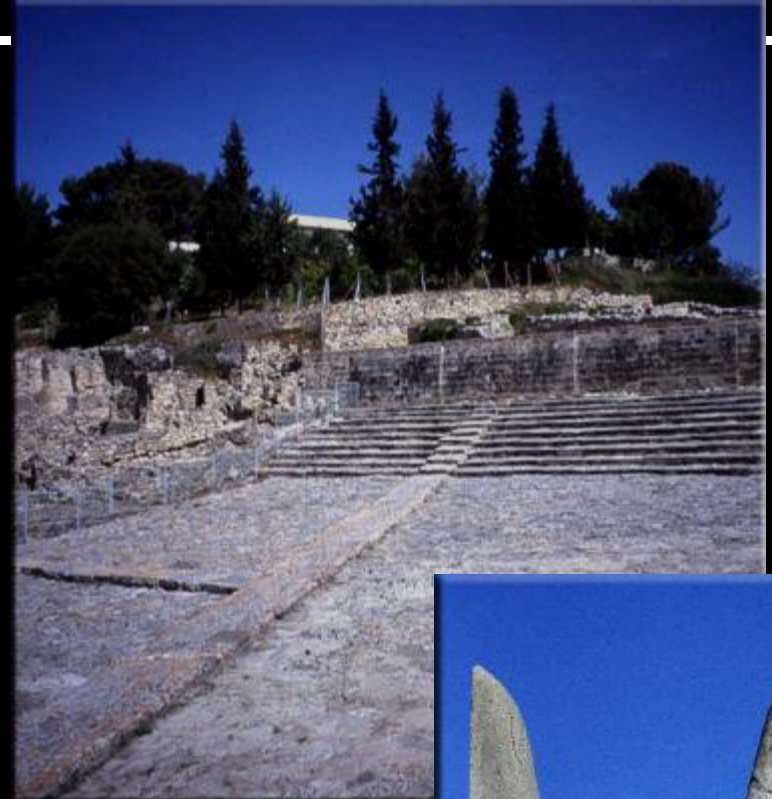
- Built around Paved central court
 - North-south alignment
- Function?
 - Communal gathering?
 - Focus of ceremonial activities, possibly associated with adjacent cult rooms?
 - Feasting?



Phaistos

Architectural Features

- Main approach always from the west
- Monumental construction of western façade & west court
- Knossos: “horns of consecration” displayed in places of prominence in the West Court
- Careful control of movement into & within palaces



Phaistos



Function of the Palaces?

- Identification is based on archaeology
 - Architectural features
 - Distribution of finds
 - Wall-paintings
 - Tablets & sealings



Phaistos

Economic Function

- Redistribution centres (Renfrew 1972):
 - Massive capacity set aside for storage of agricultural produce?
 - Magazines & pithoi
- Support palace personnel
- Is this from palace estates or a form of taxation?



Knossos, storage magazines

Economic Function

- Bureaucracy:
development of writing
systems & professional
scribal class
- Old Palaces:
 - Hieroglyphics
 - Linear A
- New Palaces:
 - Linear A



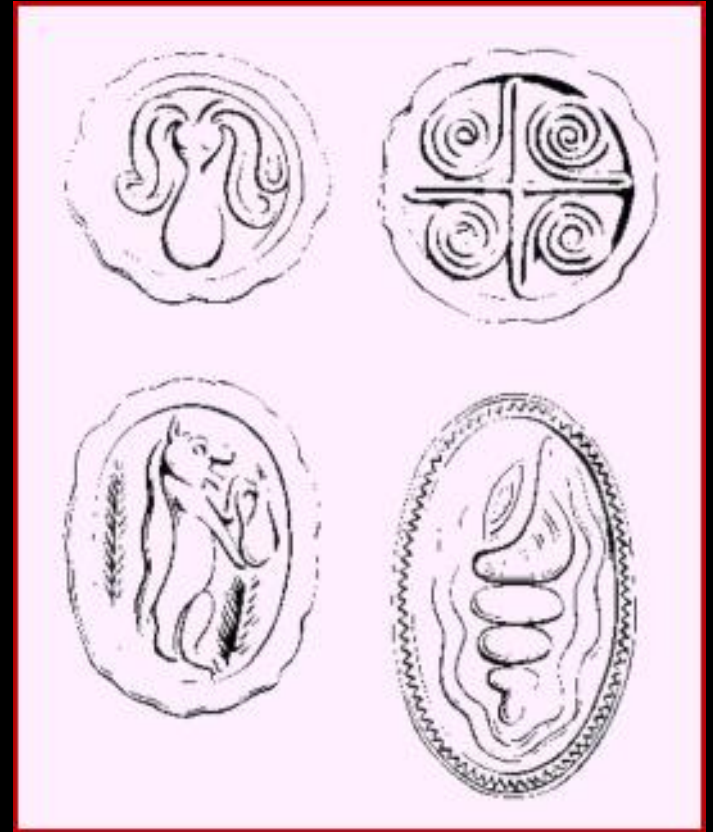
Hieroglyphic medallion



Linear A bar

Economic Function

- Complex sealing system
- Develops in Old Palaces
- New Palace at Knossos: links with other sites throughout Crete
- Sealstones & sealings



Seal impressions from Phaistos

Economic Function

- Centres for craft specialisation:
- High status goods for elites, ceremonial use, diplomatic gift exchange
- Using materials traded over long distances
 - Glyptic
 - Stone vases
 - Textiles
 - Ivories



Ivory acrobat



Bull's head rhyton



Sealstone

Religious Centres

- Official religion in palaces:
 - Restricted access within palaces, not used for communal ritual
 - Palatial control over participants
- Knossos: shrines along west side of court:
 - Throne Room
 - Tripartite Shrine
 - Temple Repository



Knossos: throne room



"snake goddess"

Elite Residence

- Luxurious living quarters: royal apartments?
- Decorated with frescoes
- Minoan halls: two adjoining rooms separated by a pier-and-door partition (a *polythyron*) & lightwell
 - Hall of the Double Axes
 - Queen's Hall
- Sanitation: toilets, baths, running water



Phaistos



Knossos

Political system?

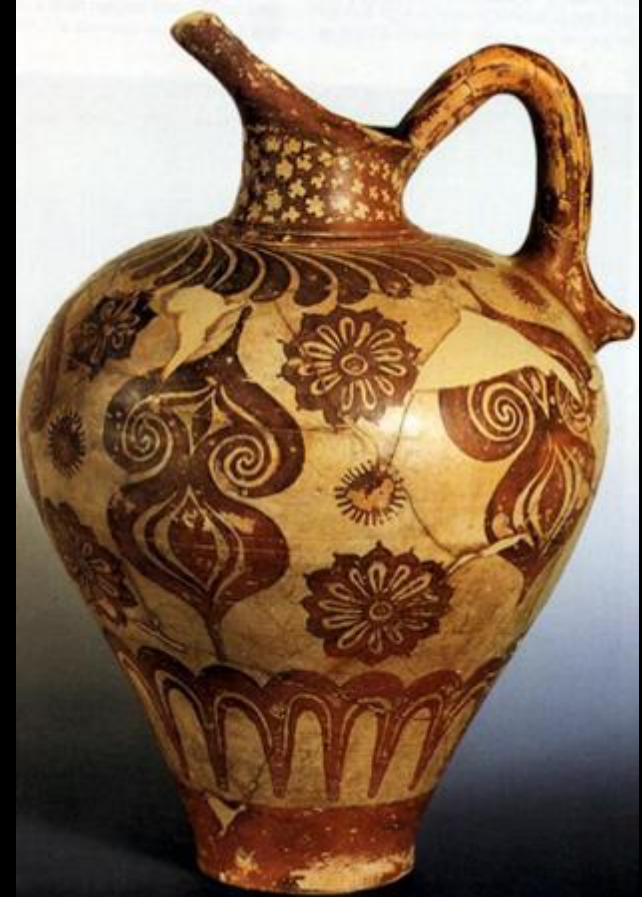
- Rulers of Crete involved in gift exchange with Egypt, but un-named
 - No representations of ruler in monumental art
 - No annals or deeds of the kings
 - Temple Tomb: possible royal burial place?
- State system of heterarchy?



Knossos: Temple Tomb

Mycenaean Greece: Chronology

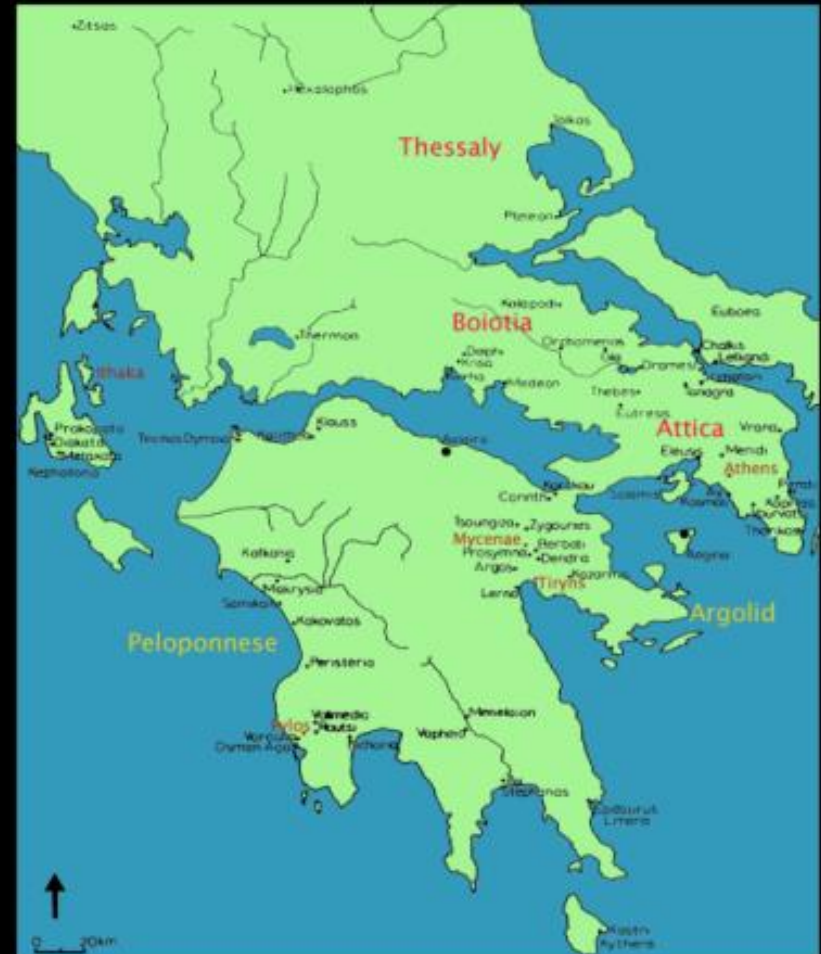
- Late Helladic = Mycenaean period
 - LH I: c.1550-1500 BC [Shaft Graves]
 - LH IIA: c.1500-1460 BC
 - LH IIB: c.1460-1400 BC
 - LH IIIA1: c.1400-1375 BC]
 - LH IIIA2: c.1375-1300 BC] Palace period
 - LH IIIB: c.1300-1190 BC]
 - LH IIIC: c.1190-1050 BC



LH II "Palace style" jug

Political Geography

- Focus of Mycenaean civilisation: southern Greece
 - Peloponnese
 - Attica
 - Boeotia
- Mycenaean control of Crete from LH III
- Distribution of Mycenaean palaces reflects the political geography of the Iliad:
 - Catalogue of Ships



Mycenaean Social Structure

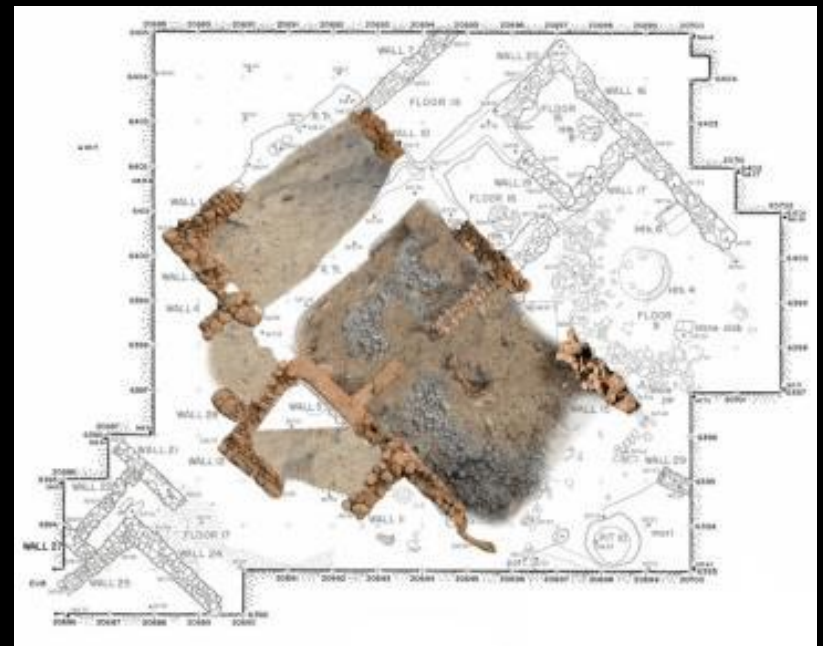
- Linear B archives: social organisation in 13th century BC
 - **Wanax:** King / ruler
 - **Lawagetus:** Leader of the 'laos'
 - **Basileus:** Chief / local ruler
 - **Telestai:** Land-owners or religious title
 - **Hequetai:** Followers (of the king), military & coast-guard
 - **Demos:** People



Linear B tablet

Origins of the Mycenaean palace

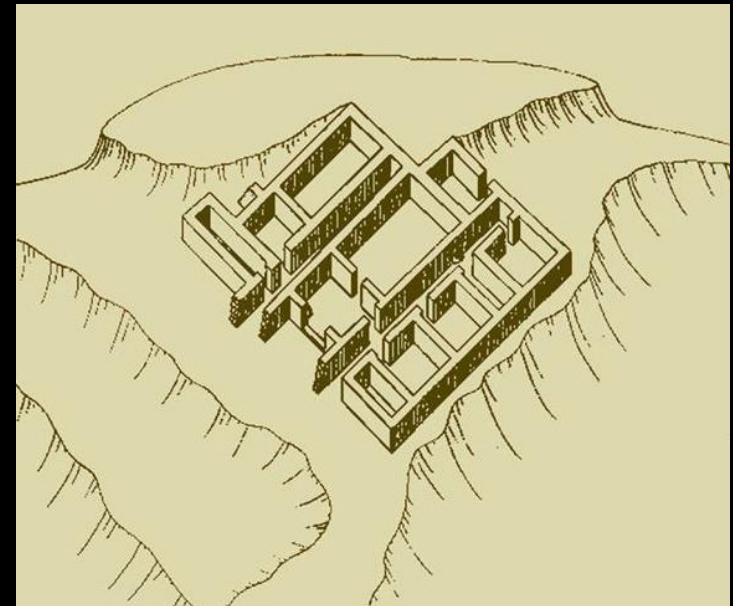
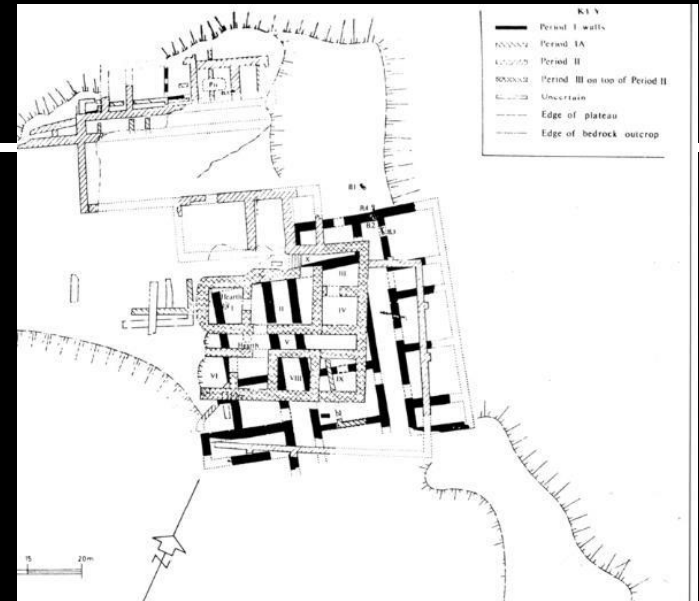
- LH I Tsoungiza: central rectangular structure with built hearth:
 - Monumentalization of (ceremonial) space
 - Additional rooms added to side & end
- Beginning to look like **megaron** unit in palace



Tsoungiza , EU7

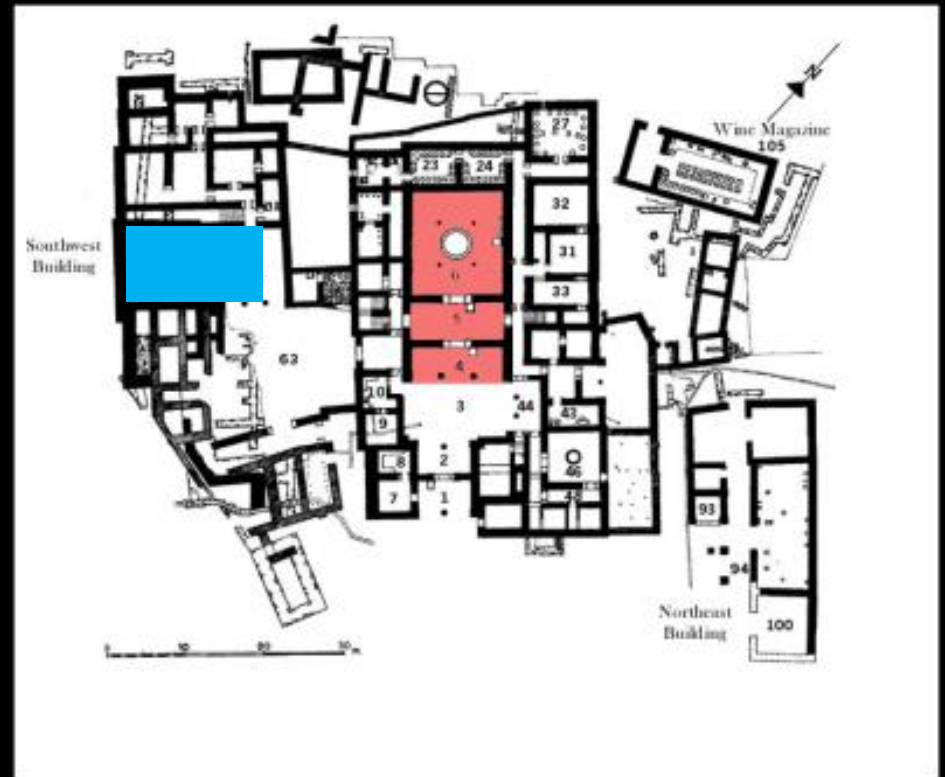
Menelaion, Sparta

- LH II: developing as important site – palace style sherds
- LH II?: construction of Mansion 1:
 - Tripartite two-storeyed building
 - Central megaron unit
- LH IIIA1: Mansion 2
 - Split level tripartite building
 - 38 x 50m
- Early examples of elite domestic architecture



LH III Palace Architecture

- **Megaron:** central unit
 - King's throne room?
 - Decorated with wall paintings
- Subsidiary rooms set aside for storage, workshops, archives
- Upper storey: residential rooms
- Subsidiary megaron: for *lawagetas*?



Pylos

Role of the Wanax

- Close association between ideology, performance & the central hearth
- Audience: inner circle of high-ranking officials
- Physical control of access:
 - Manipulation of space to heighten the tension of participants
- Frescoes “symbolized the eternal and divinely ordained character of such ritual activities” (Maran 2001: 117)



Pylos: central hearth

Function

- Centres of power
- Situated on top of defensive acropolis:
 - Commanding situation: territorial control
 - Defensive: massive fortifications (from LH IIIB)
 - Competing regional polities



Tiryns

Function

- Economic redistribution: storerooms
- Texts
 - Workers involved in production of textiles & perfumed oils
- Elite craft production:
 - Mycenae: workshops located outside palaces but on acropolis



Pylos storerooms

Summary

- Aegean: secondary state formation?
- Crete c.1900 BC: first appearance of palaces
 - Economic centres
 - Religious centres
 - Residence of elite
- No firm evidence for kingship & Minoan political organisation is unclear
- Mycenaean palaces:
 - Elite residences emerge in LH II-III A₁
 - LH IIIB height of the palaces:
 - Economic function (especially from archives)
 - Ceremonial: associated with the ideology of the wanax