

Chapter 4
The Art of the Aegean
(Bronze Age)

Cyclades – Cycladic Art

Crete – Minoan Art

Mainland Greece – Mycenaean

The Prehistoric Aegean



Early Cycladic Art
ca. 3000-2000 BCE



Figurine of a woman, from Syros
(Cyclades), Greece, ca. 2500–2300 BCE.
Marble, approx. 1' 6" high. National
Archaeological Museum, Athens.



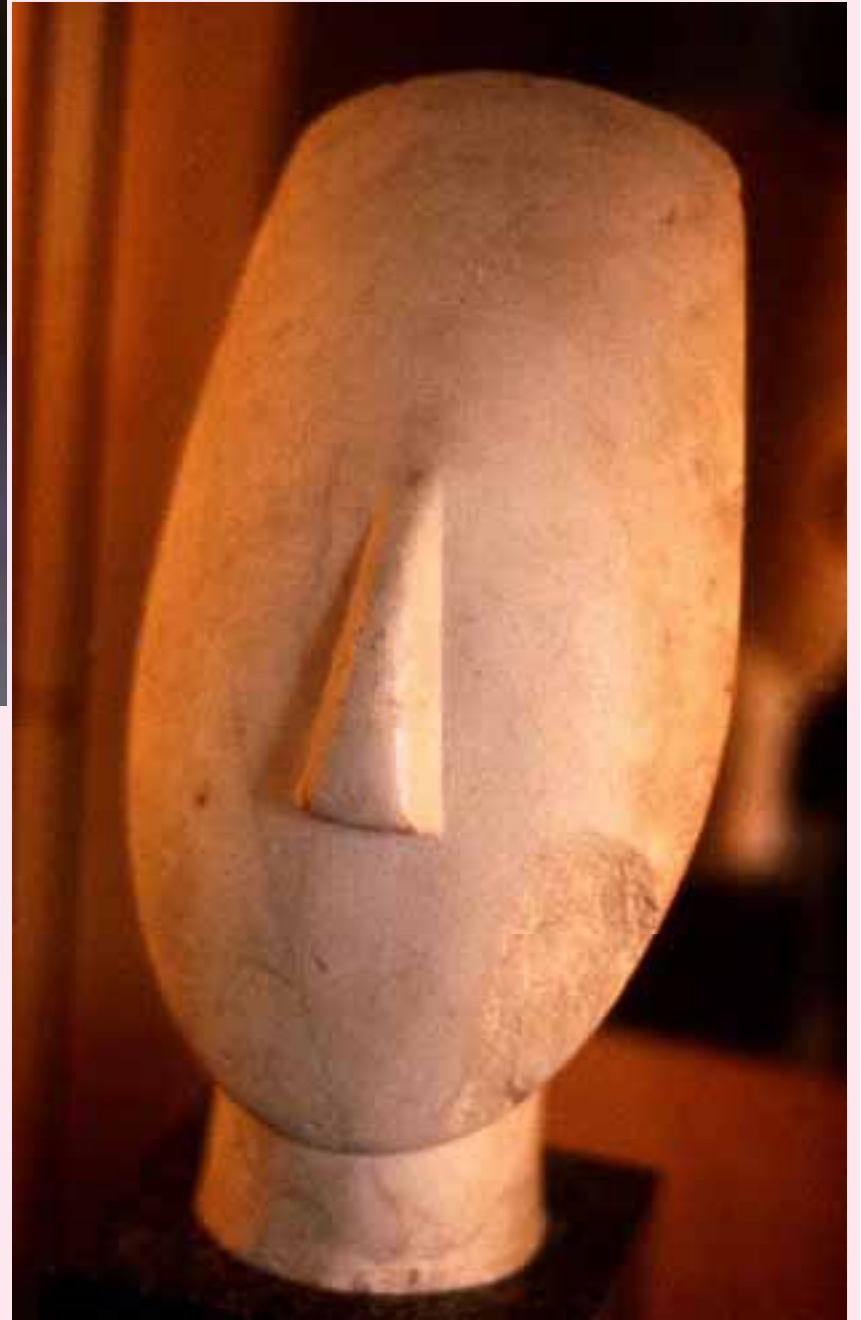


Cycladic Figurines



Comparison: Constantin Brancusi ,
Sleeping Muse 1909-10

Cycladic Head
25th 21st c. BCE





Head of a Large Female Figure.

Cycladic, 2600 - 2500 B.C. Marble
and pigment

9 x 3 1/2 x 2 1/2 in. The Getty
Museum. L.A

Details like eyes, eyebrows, hair, even garments, were brightly painted onto the figurines and have been worn away by time.

The figures were originally decorated with red, black, and blue designs to indicate facial features, jewelry, body paint, or tattoos.

Among the existing examples of cycladic figurines only 5 percent depict men, and most of these are engaged in special activities, such as drinking or playing musical instruments.

In a preliterate society, musicians played an important role not only as entertainers but also as storytellers who perpetuated myth and folklore through song.

Male lyre player, from Keros (Cyclades), Greece, ca. 2700–2500 BCE. Marble, approx. 9” high. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Late Minoan Art
ca. 1700-1200 BCE

(top)-
L. Cretan
hieroglyphs

R. Linear A

Minoan. Never
been deciphered.
Not Indo-
European
language.

(bottom)

Linear B

Mycenaean. Ca.
1500 BCE. Indo-
European. Related
to old Greek.

Top and Bottom -
Clay tablets from
Knossos, Crete.

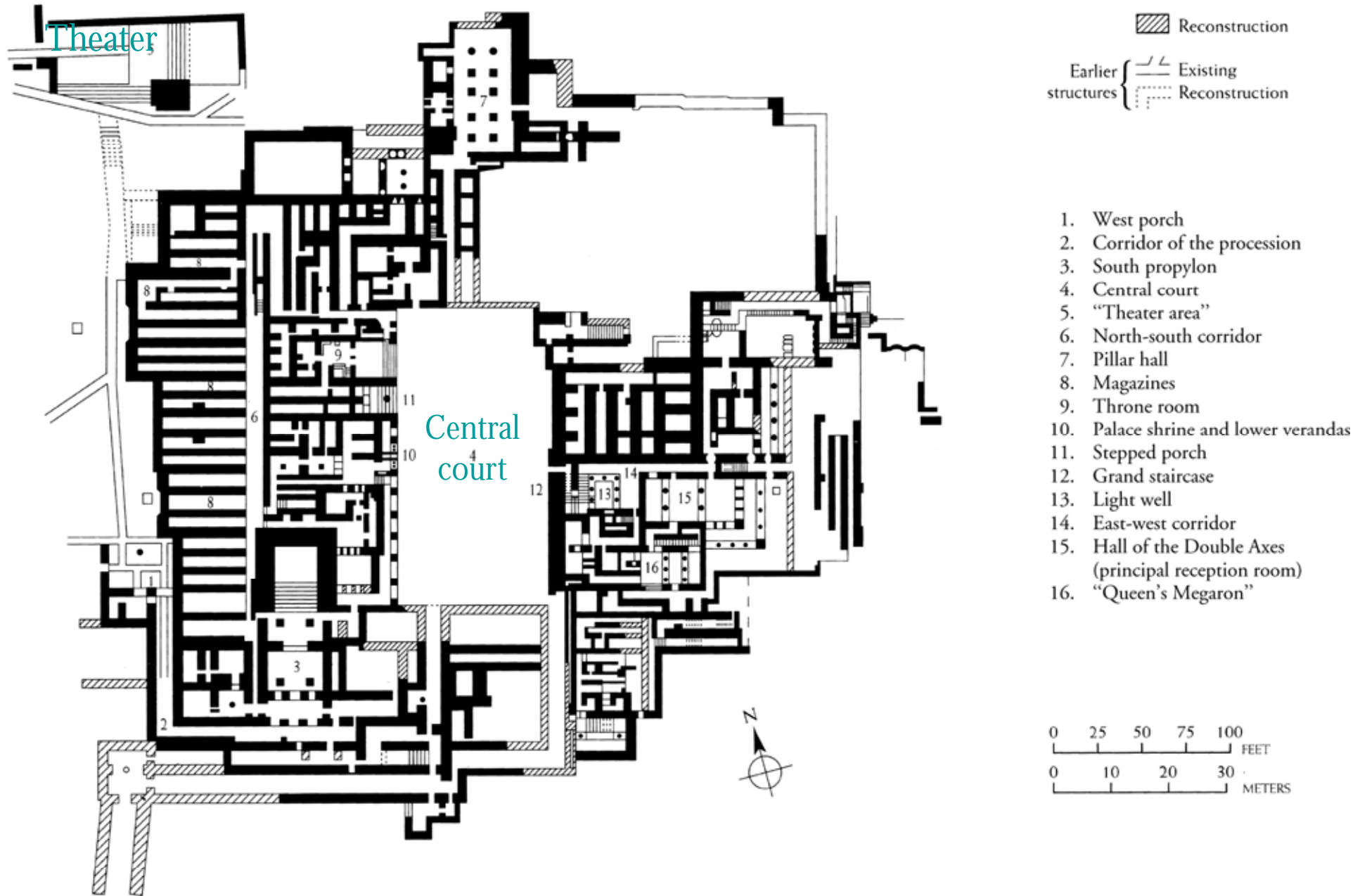




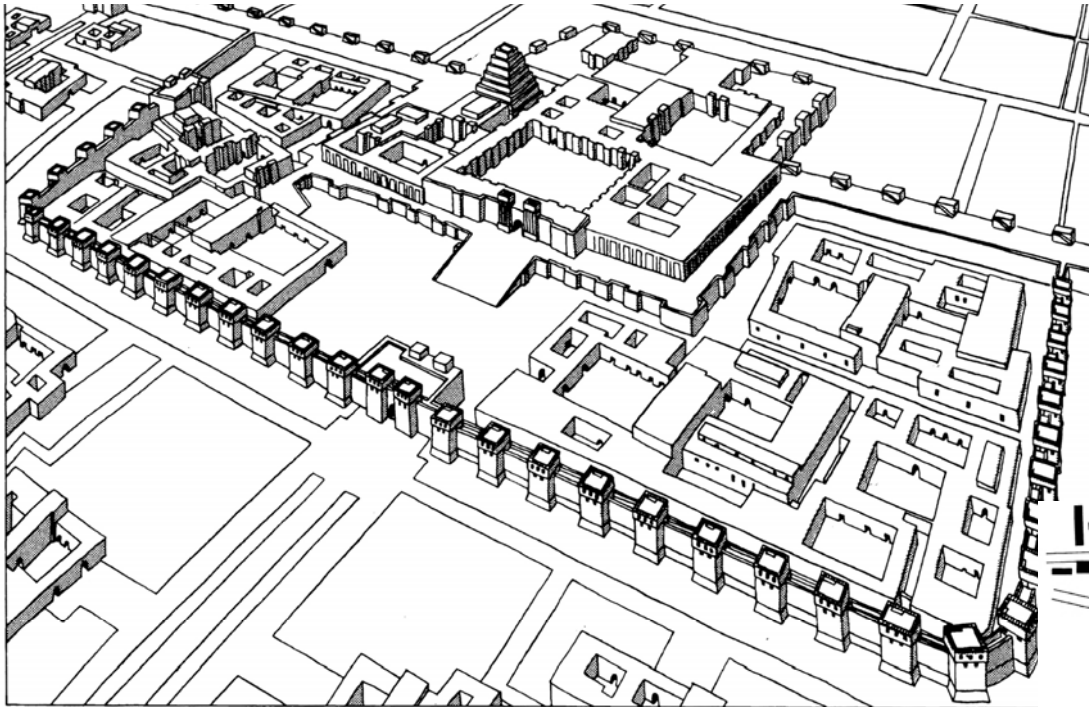
The Phaistos Disc, Crete. ca. 1700 BCE. Clay, about 15 cm in diameter.



palace at Knossos. Aerial view. (Crete), Greece, ca. 1700–1400 BCE



Palace at Knossos. Plan. (Crete), Greece,
ca. 1700–1400 BCE



Palace at Knossos. Crete
ca. 1700–1400 BCE

Comparison: Citadel of Sargon II
Khorsabad, Iraq, ca. 720–705 BCE.
25 acres; more than 200 courtyards
and rooms.





Restored Pithoi Jars from the Palace of Minos.

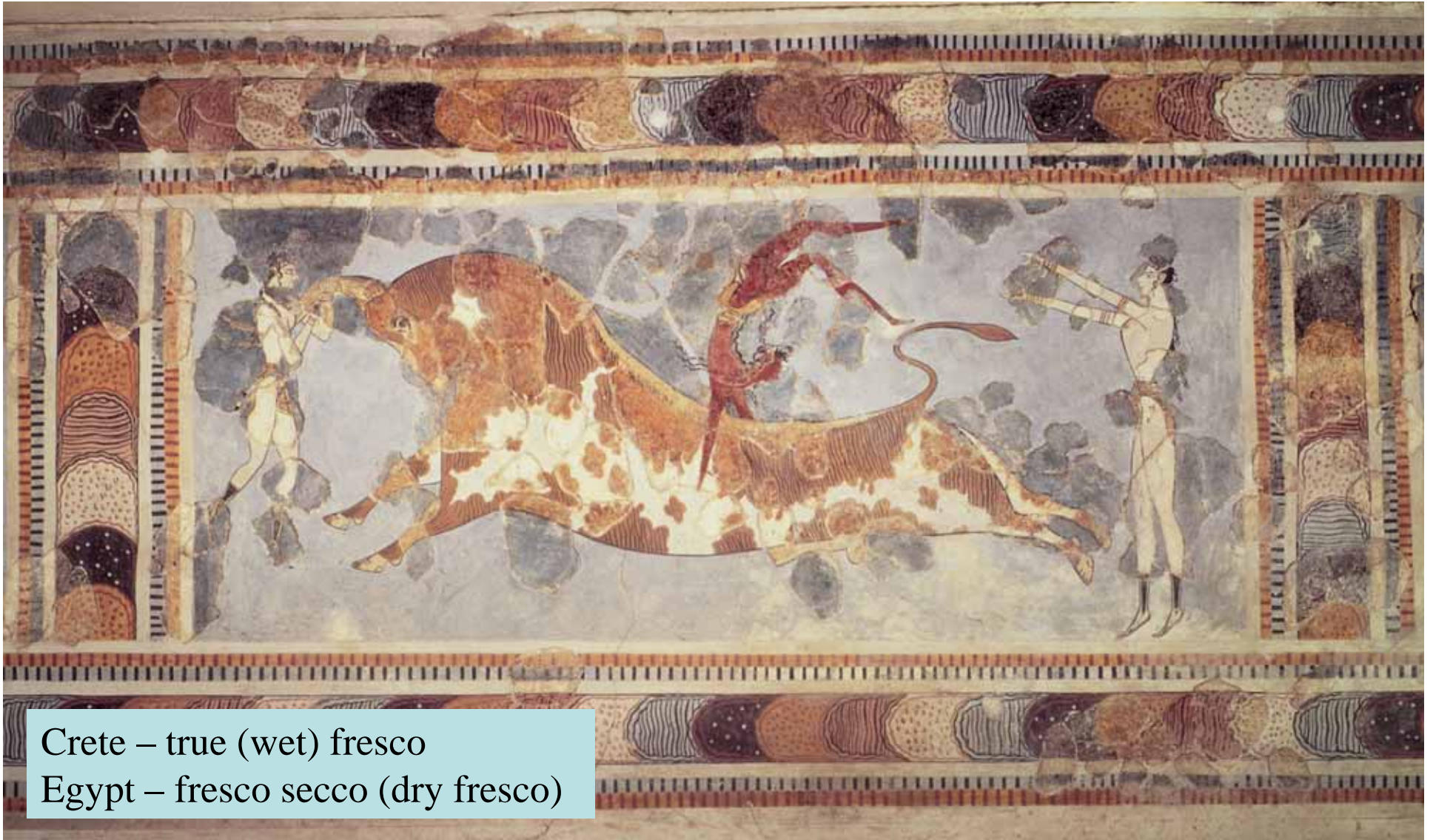


Palace at Knossos. Stairwell in the residential quarter. (Crete), Greece, ca. 1700–1400 BCE.

Minoan Painting



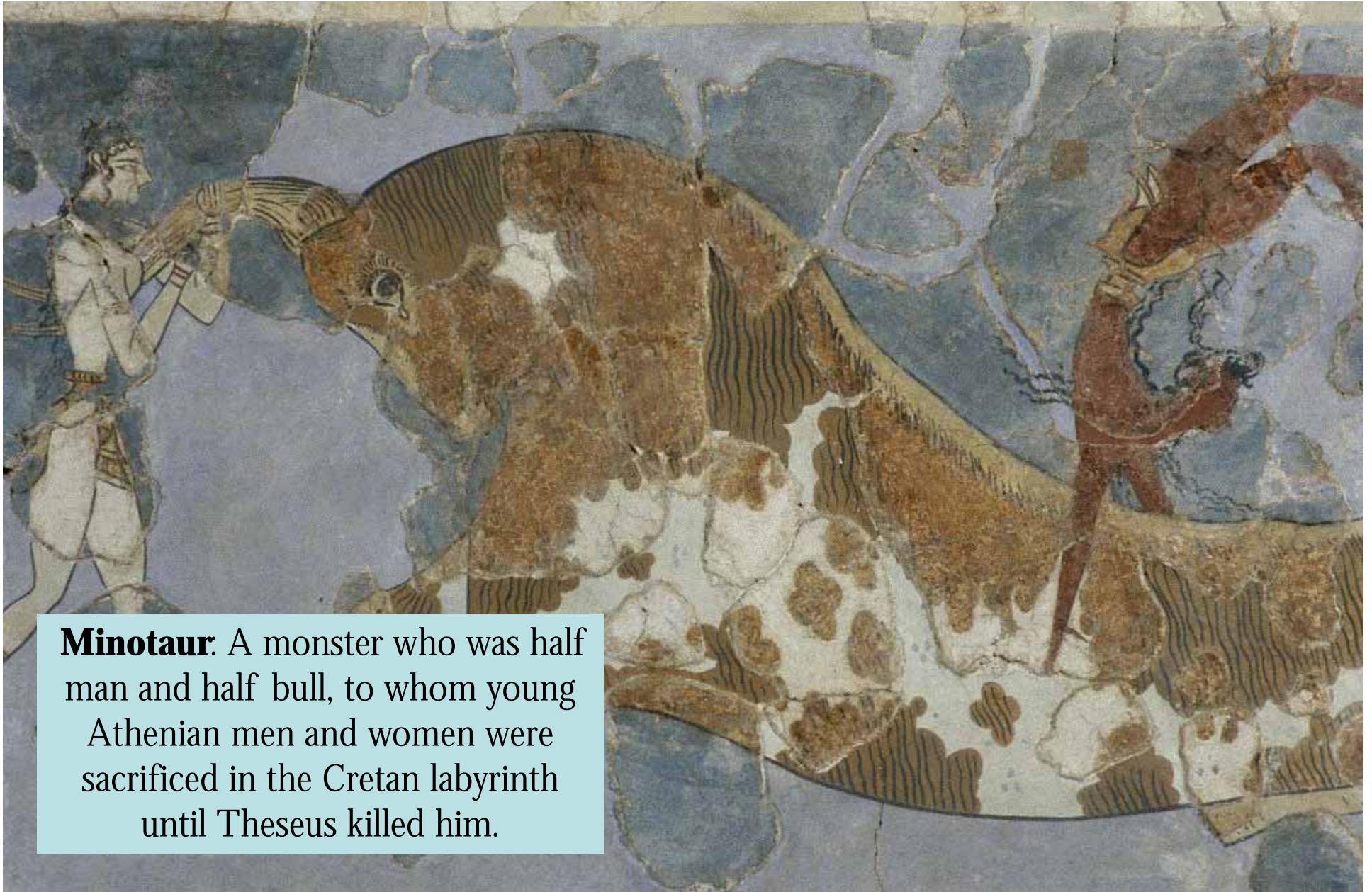
Dolphins from the Queen's Megaron,
Palace of Knossos, Crete. ca. 1450–1400 BCE



Crete – true (wet) fresco

Egypt – fresco secco (dry fresco)

Bull-leaping, from the palace at Knossos (Crete), Greece, ca. 1450–1400 BCE.
Fresco, approx. 2' 8" high, including border. Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.



Minotaur. A monster who was half man and half bull, to whom young Athenian men and women were sacrificed in the Cretan labyrinth until Theseus killed him.

Bull-leaping. Detail. The leaper and the figure standing in front of the bull.

**Gold ring with
a depiction of
a bull-leaping
scene** from
Phourni, Crete.
Before 2000 BC.



Bullfights in Spain (Right) and Peru (Bottom)





Bull-leaping

from the palace at Knossos (Crete), Greece, ca. 1450–1400 BCE. Fresco, approx. 2' 8" high, including border.

Comparison: Fowling scene, from the tomb of Nebamun, Thebes, Egypt, New Kingdom. Fresco on dry plaster, approx. 2' 8" high..



Minoan woman (La Parisienne), from the palace at Knossos (Crete), Greece, ca. 1450–1400 BCE.



Comparison: Rahotep and Nofret

from Mastaba of Rahotep

Painted Limestone

Height: 121 cm

Old Kingdom

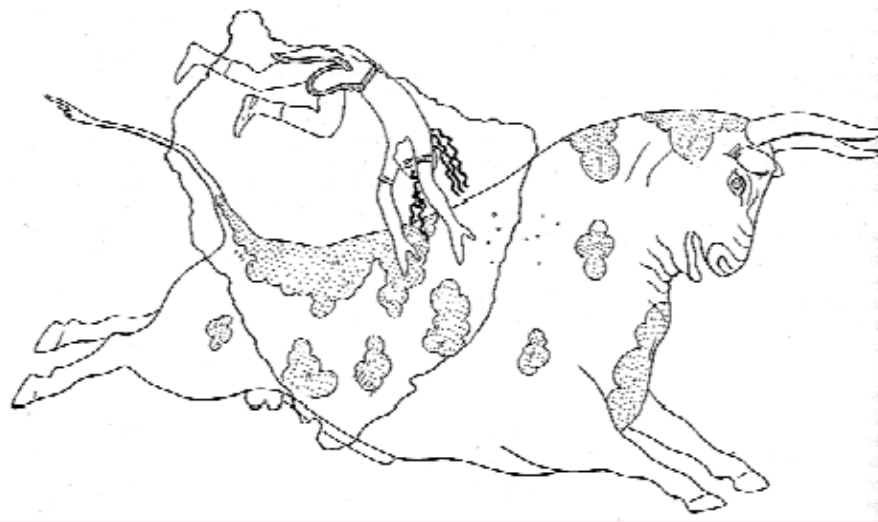
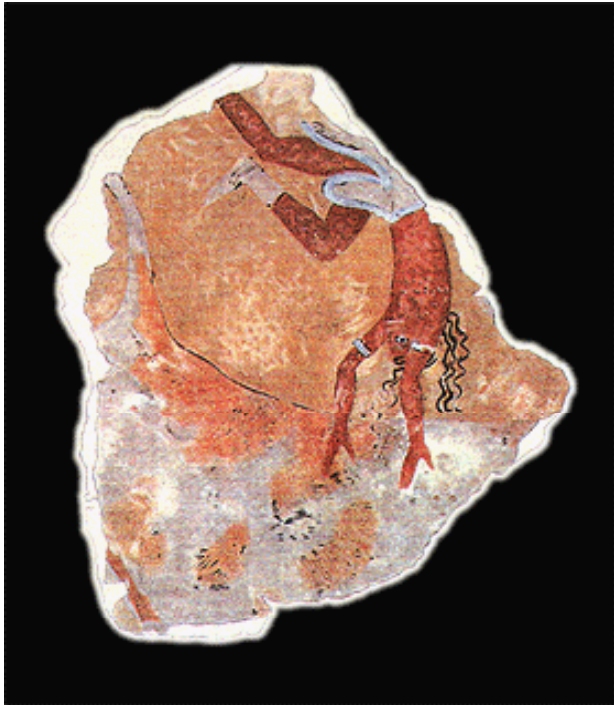
Cairo Antiquities Museum



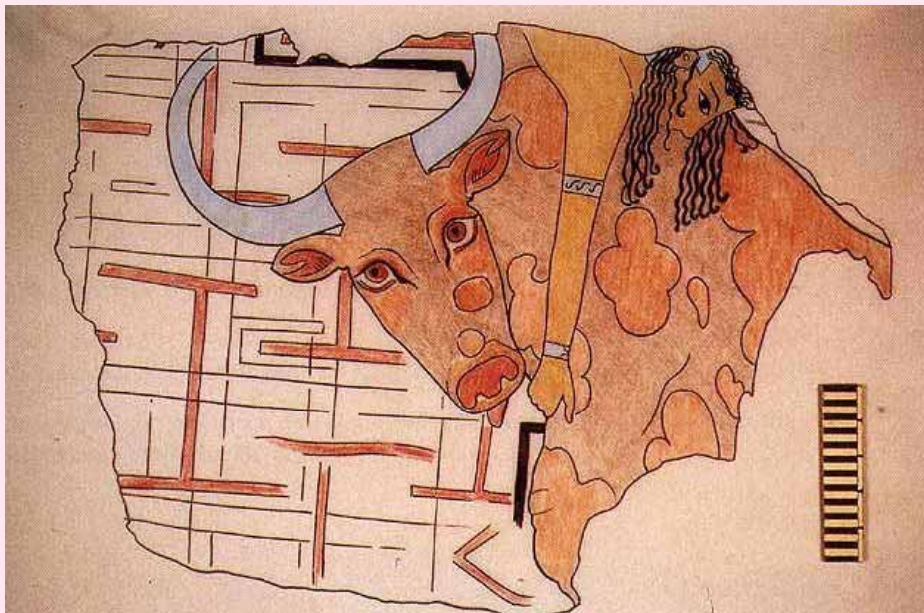
Bull-leaping

from the palace at Knossos (Crete), Greece, ca. 1450–1400 BCE. Fresco, approx. 2' 8" high, including border. Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.





Bull Leaping fresco from Tell el Daba (ancient Avaris).
Egypt. 16th c. BCE





1628 BCE – Thera volcanic eruption



Miniature Ships Fresco, Akrotiri, Thera (present day Santorini), Greece, ca. 1650 BCE.
Approx. 1' 5" high. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Miniature Ships Fresco. Detail



Miniature Ships Fresco. Detail



Landscape with swallows from, Akrotiri, Thera, Greece
1650-1625 B.C.E. Fresco, approx. 7' 6" high. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Landscape with swallows. Detail

Compare the Egyptian and Minoan wall paintings. Describe the subject and the technique (true or dry fresco); purpose (based on location where it was found); colors; order and organization; geometrical shapes vs. organic shapes, motion, mood, viewpoint (profile view or aerial view) etc.



Garden with Fishpond. Fresco from Thebes. Egypt. New Kingdom



Landscape with swallows
from Akrotiri, Thera, Greece
1650-1625 BCE. Fresco.



Crocus-gatherers (for saffron). Xeste 3, Acrotiri. 1650-1625

Minoan Sculpture



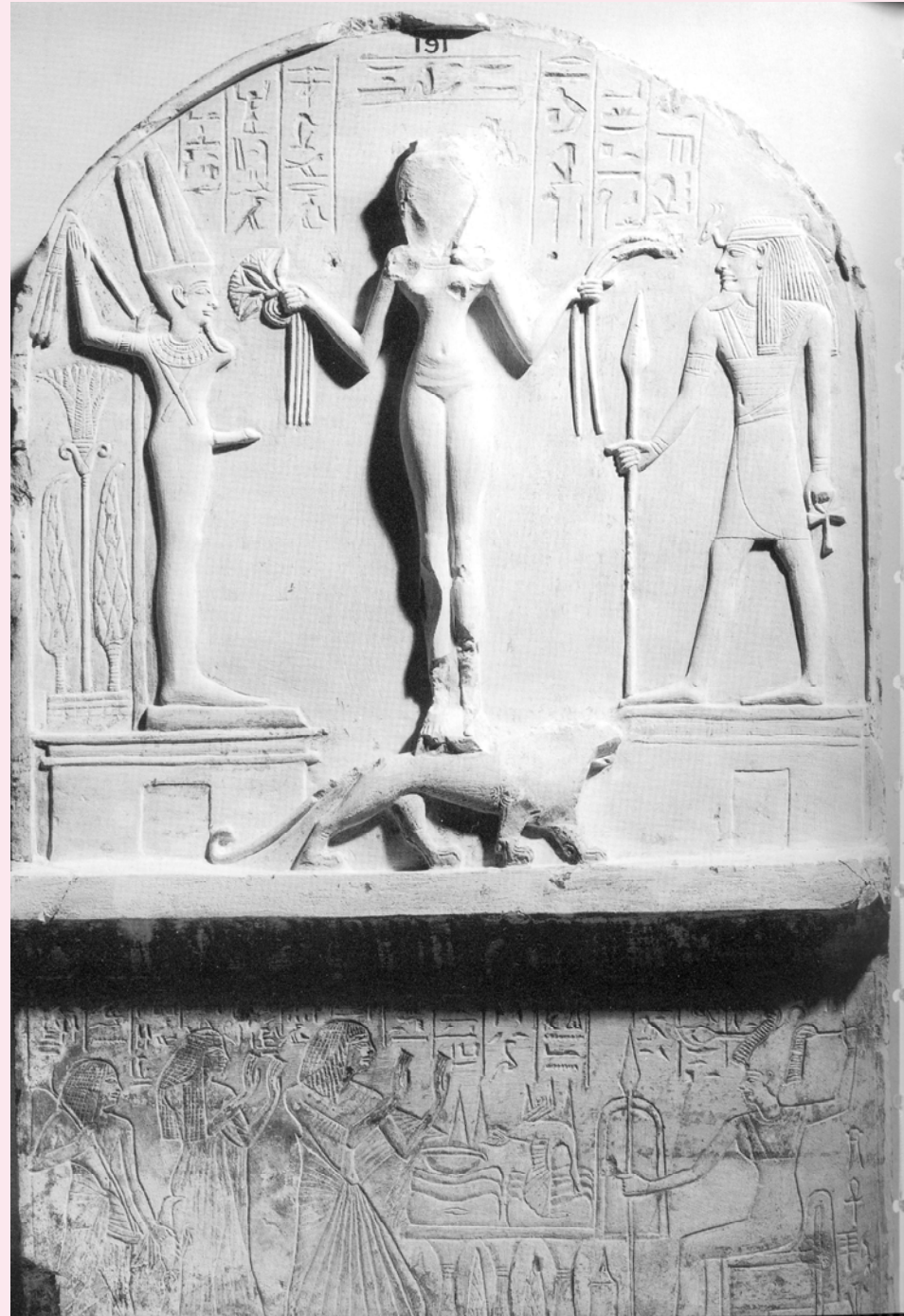
Snake Goddess, from the palace at Knossos (Crete), Greece, ca. 1600 BCE. Faience, approx. 1' 1 1/2" high. Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.



Nag Panchami – a festival in the honor of the snake god Shesha Nag. India.



Snake charmers



Comparison: Qadesh flanked by Min and Reshef
Egyptian reliefs. New Kingdom



Comparison: Tree flanked by ibexes. Sumerian seal.



Goddess Flanked by Ibexes.
Ivory Pyxid Cover. Minet-el-Beida. Syria. C. 1250 BCE.
Paris, Louvre.



Goddesses with crowns of poppies, birds and horns. Crete. 1400-1100 BCE



Goddesses with crowns of birds and horns. Crete. 1400-1100 BCE

Harvester Vase, from Hagia Triada (Crete), Greece, ca. 1500 BCE. Steatite, greatest diameter approx. 5".
Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.
Overall view, with harvester looking over his shoulder





Harvester Vase, from Hagia Triada (Crete), Greece, ca. 1500 BCE. Steatite, greatest diameter approx. 5". Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.

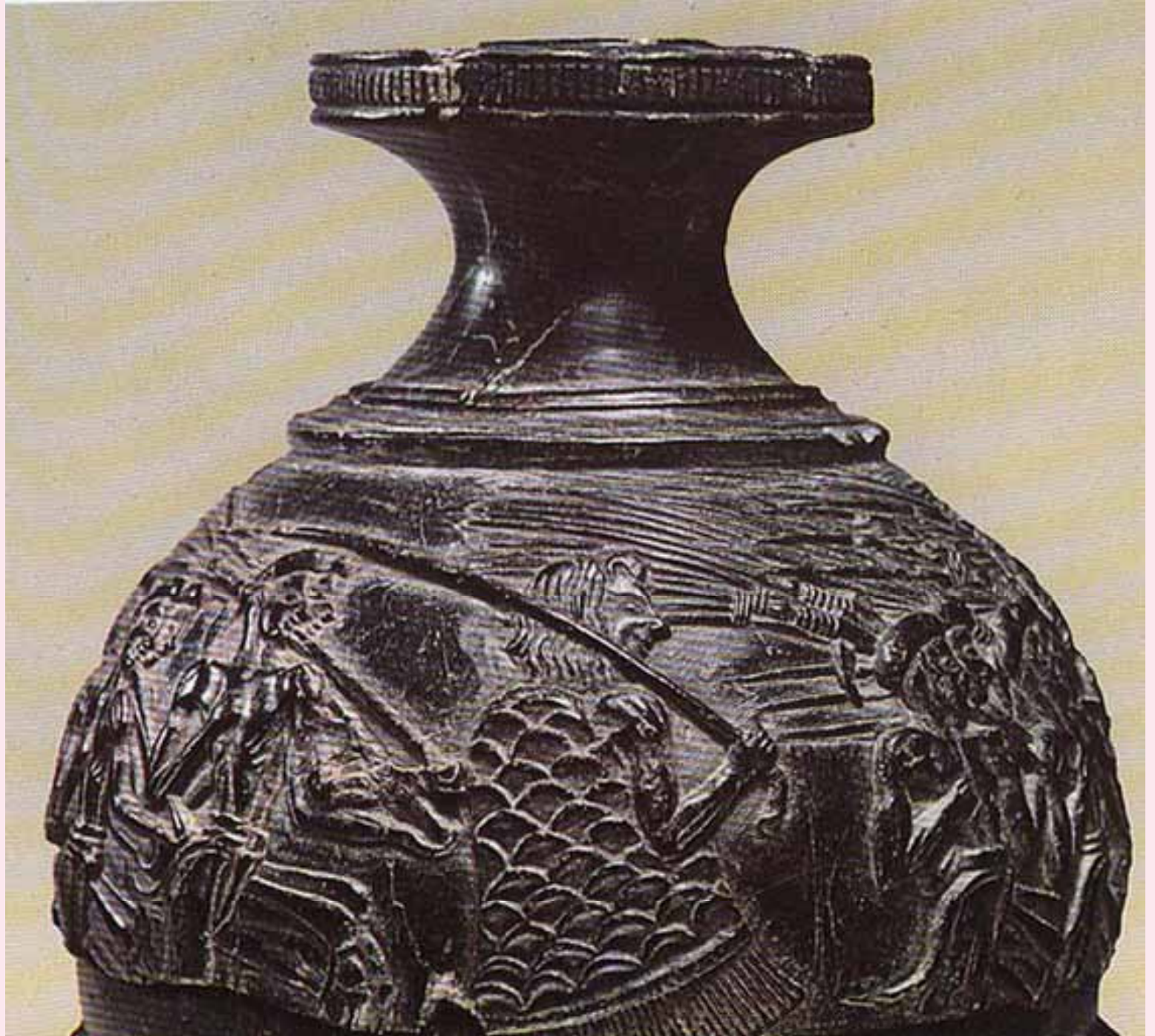


Harvester Vase. Detail



Clay sistrum. 2100 - 2000 bce

**Harvester
Vase**

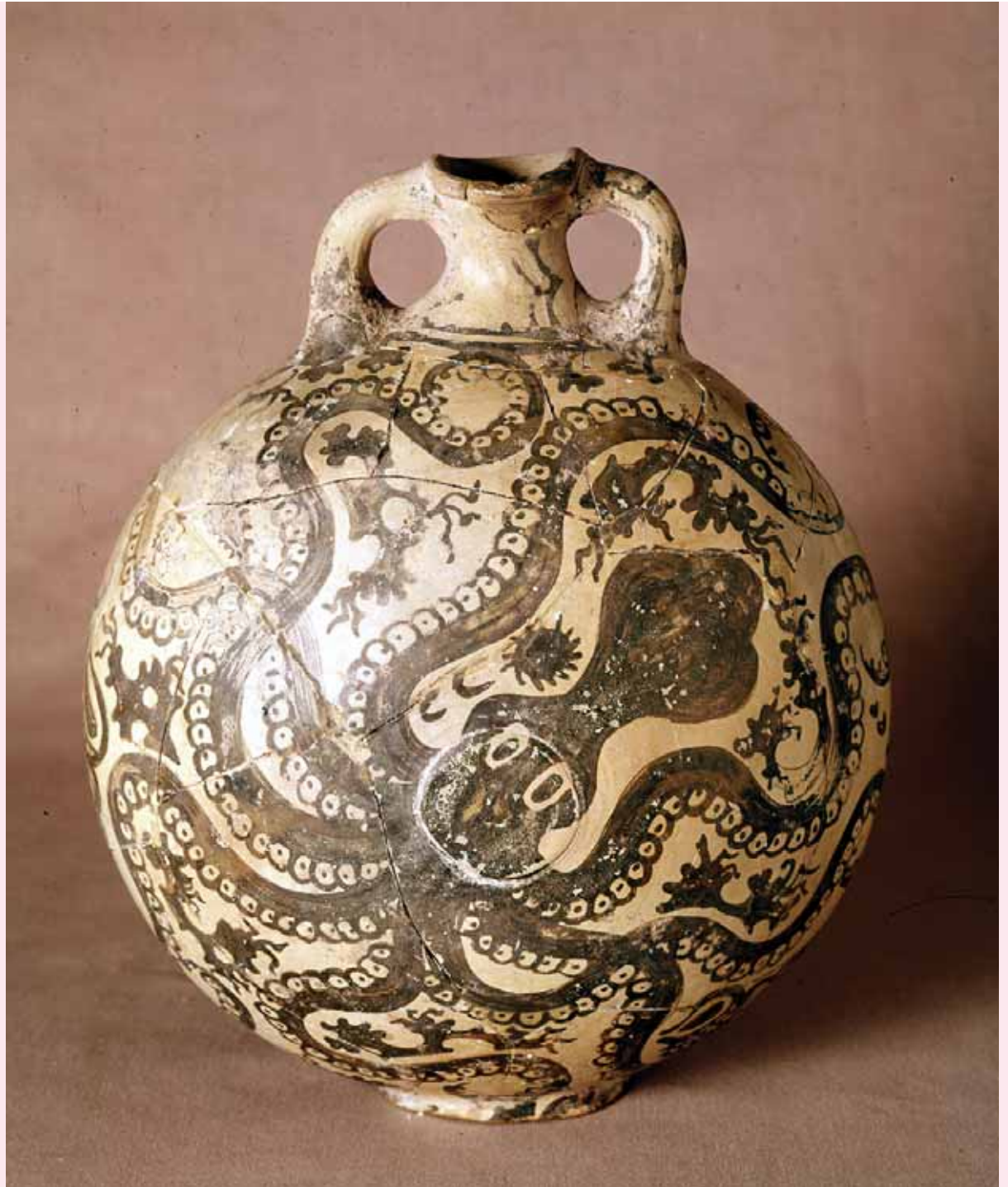


Minoan Pottery

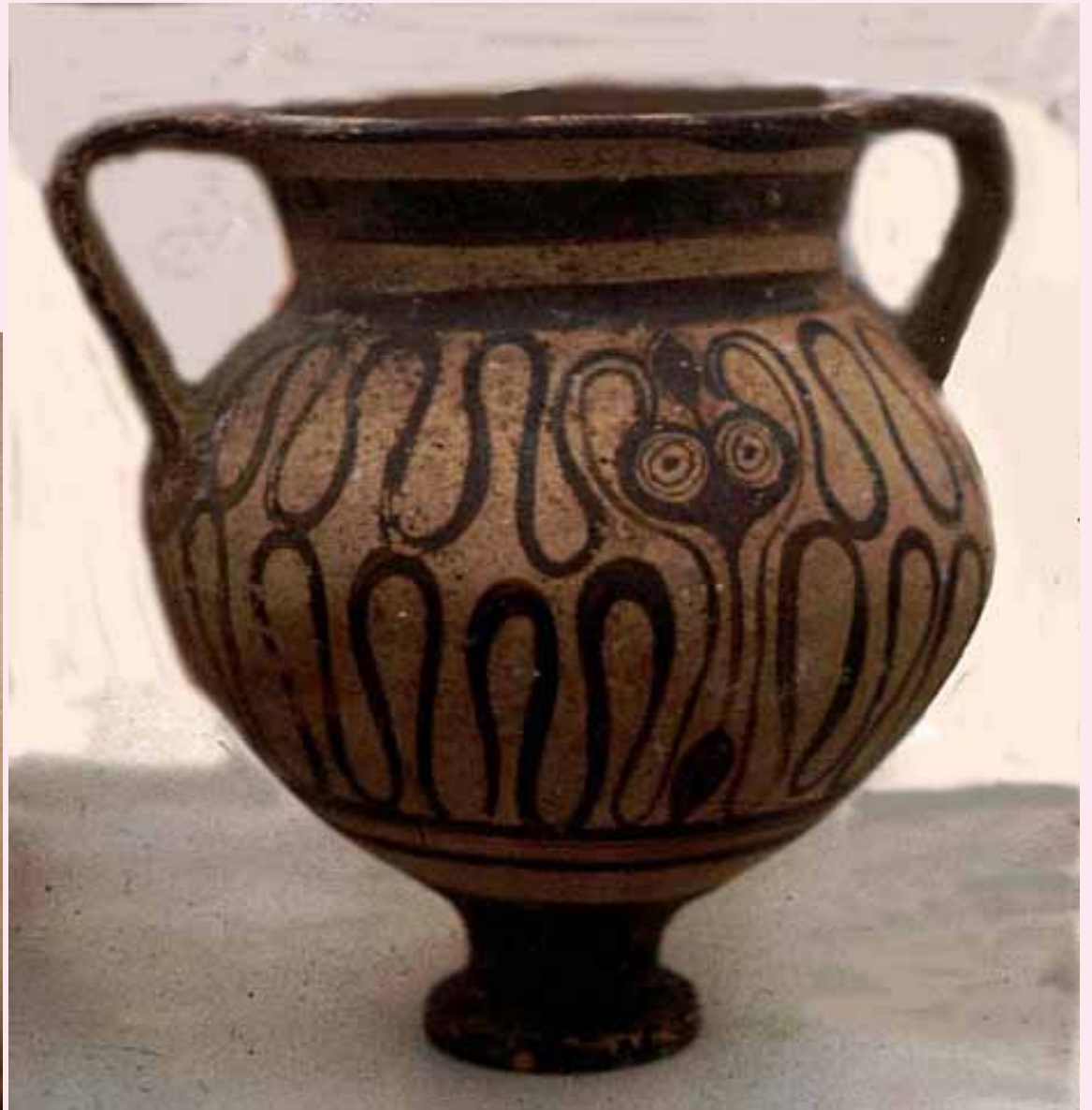
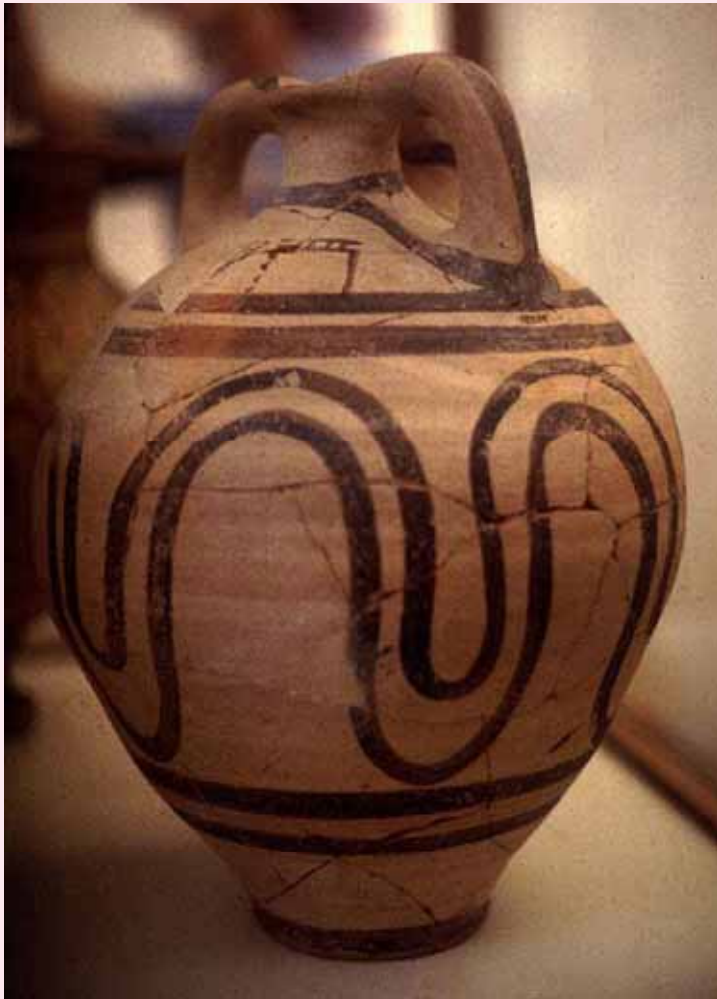


Kamares Ware jar, from Phaistos
(Crete), Greece, ca. 1800–1700 BCE.
Approx. 1' 8" high.
Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.

Marine Style octopus jar,
from Palaikastro (Crete),
Greece, ca. 1500 BCE.
Approx. 11" high.
Archaeological Museum,
Herakleion.



Octopus Jars
14-13th c. BCE. Crete



Octopus Krater
14-13th c. BCE. Crete

Mycenaean Art

ca. 1700-1200 BCE

1450 - 1375 BCE: Mycenaean Greeks of the mainland invaded and took control of Crete.

The Prehistoric Aegean



The Homeric "long-haired Achaeans" would have been a part of the Mycenaean civilization that dominated Greece during the time of the Trojan War



1300-1200 BCE - Trojan War (?)

750-700 BCE - Homer writes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

**The Judgement
of Paris** on an
Etruscan bronze
mirrorback, 4th-
3rd century BCE
Louvre





Heinrich Schliemann
1822-1890



Trojan Horse. Reconstruction.



**Sophie Schliemann wearing
"Jewels of Helen" from
Troy**



Heinrich Schliemann
1822-1890

The couple had two children, Andromache and Agamemnon Schliemann.



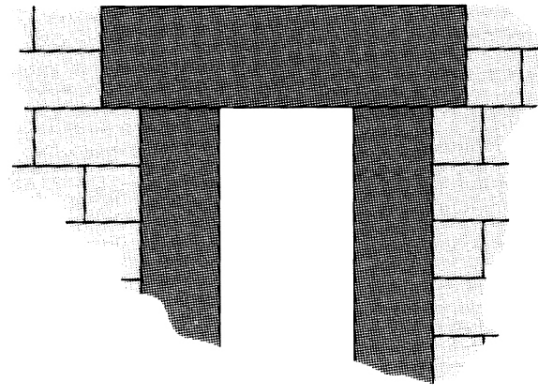
Citadel at Tiryns. Aerial view. Greece, ca. 1400–1200 BCE.

Three methods of spanning a passageway:

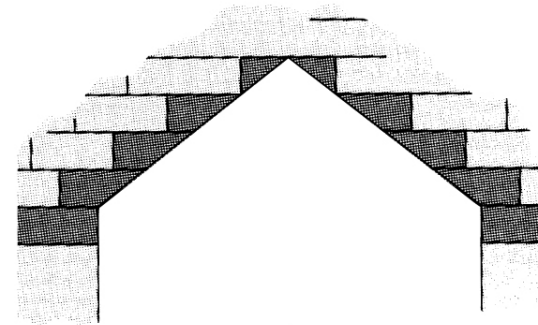
(a) post and lintel

(b) corbeled arch

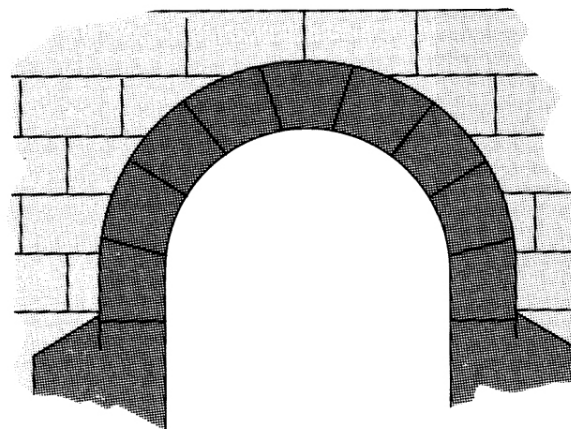
(c) arch



a

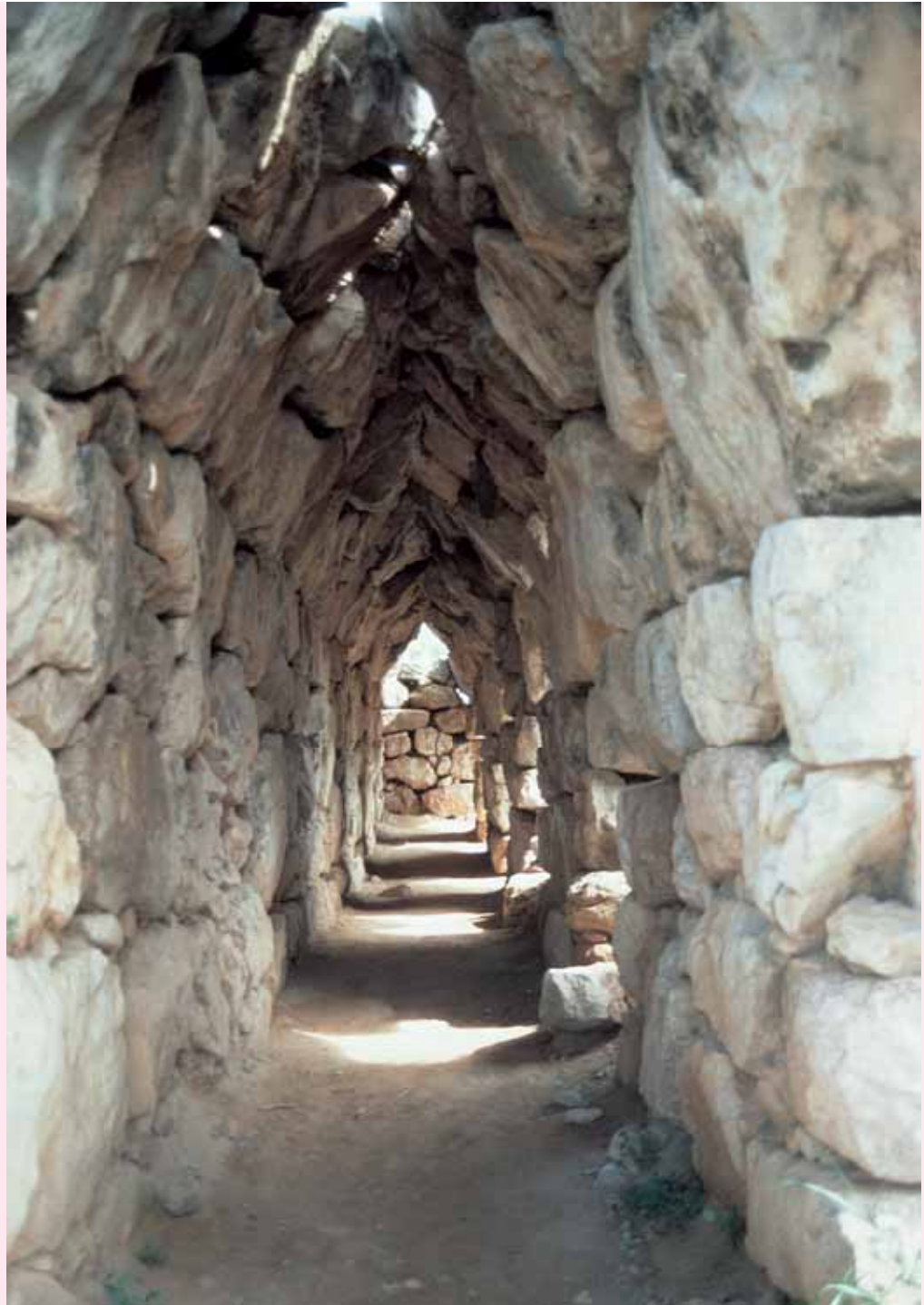


b



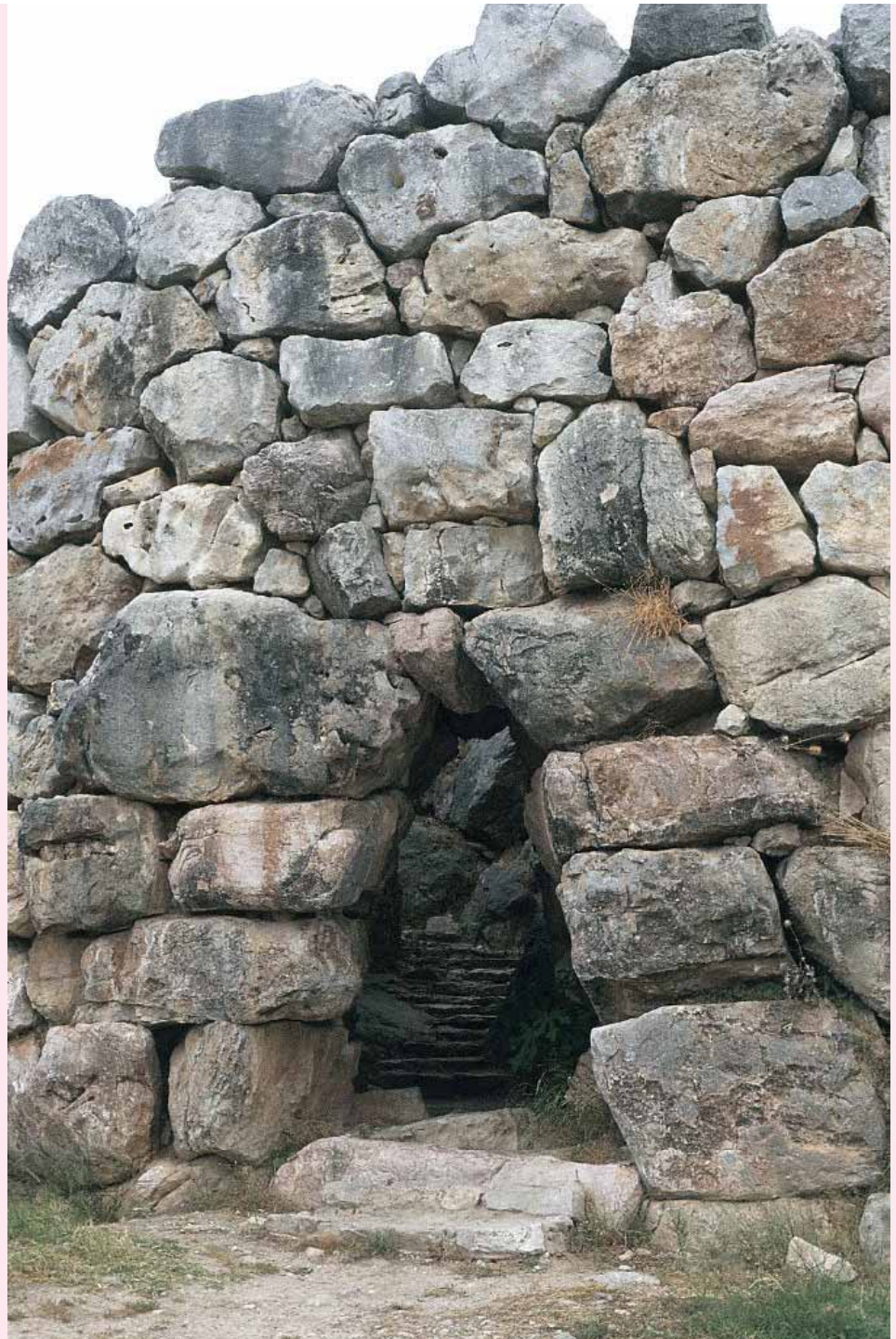
c

Citadel at Tiryns. Corbeled gallery
Tiryns, Greece, ca. 1400–1200 BCE.



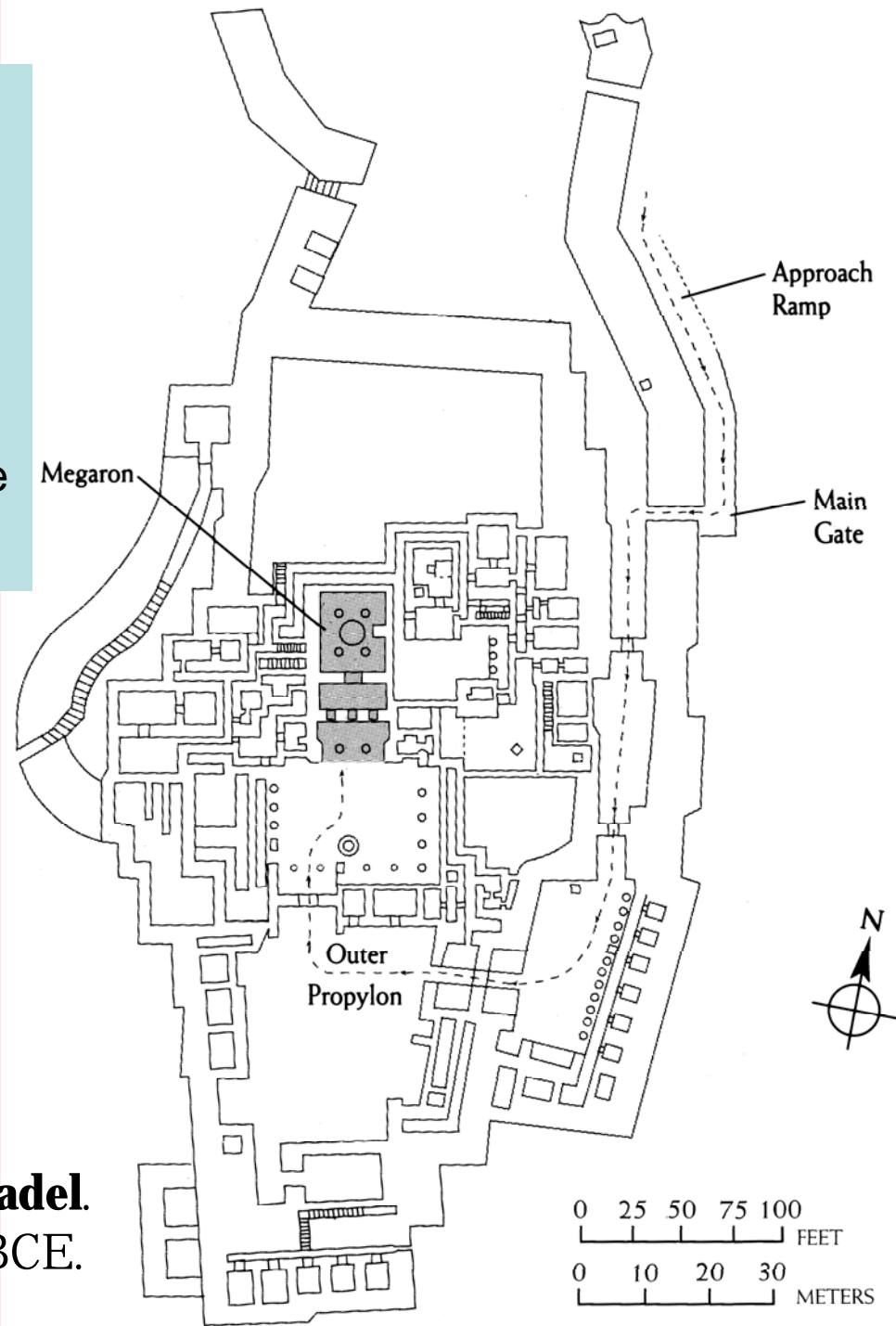
Citadel at Tiryns

View of W bastion and fortified entry



Megaron: The main hall or central room of a palace or house, especially of Mycenaean Greece, having a pillared porch; antechamber; and a central hearth or sacrificial pit.

- **Hearth** (pronounced- harth): fireplace



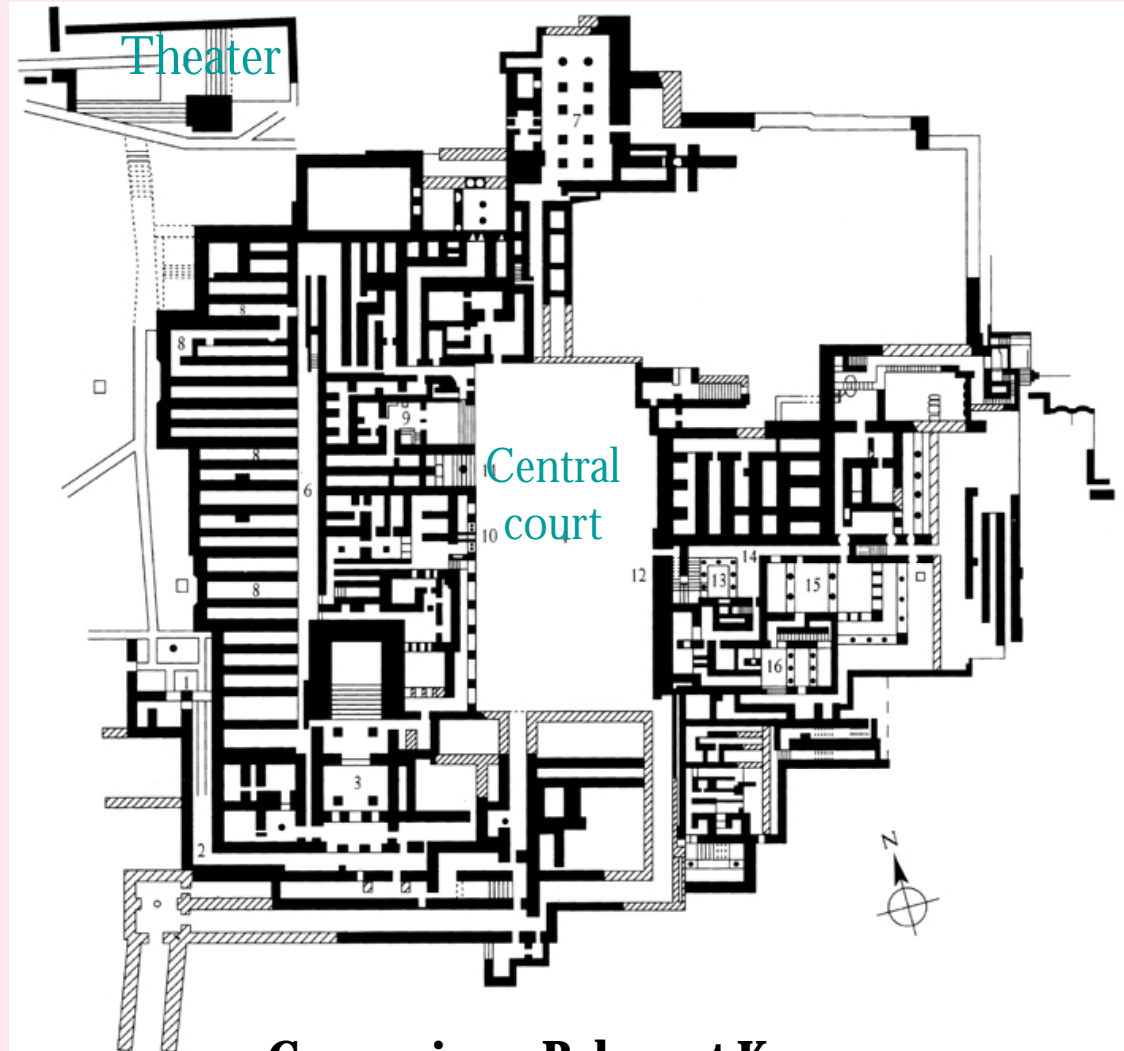
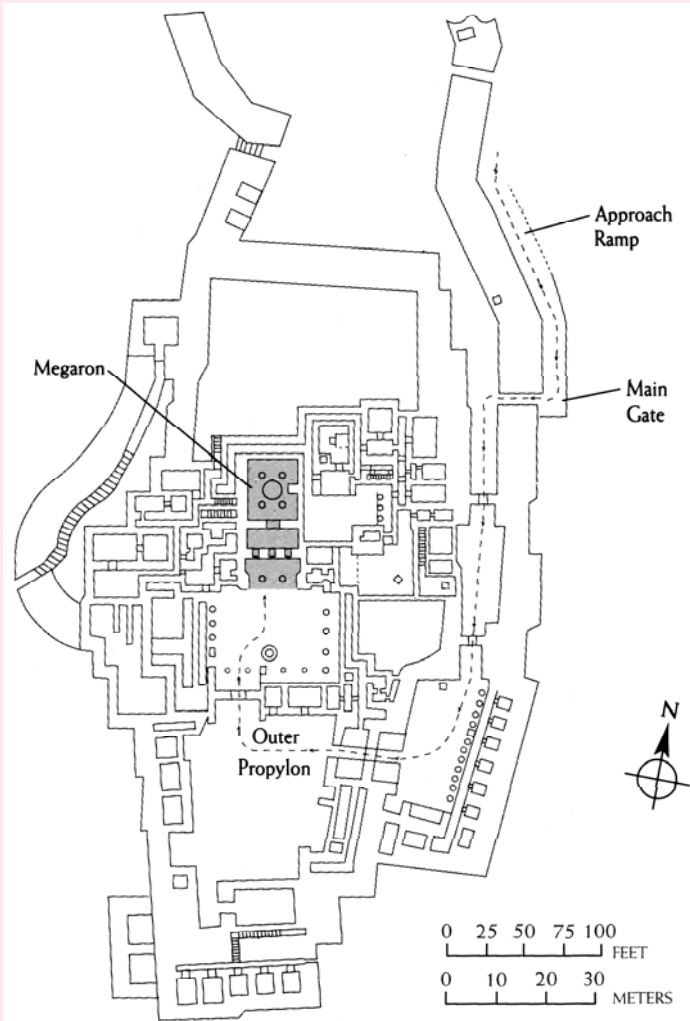
Palace and southern part of the citadel.
Plan. Tiryns, Greece, ca. 1400–1200 BCE.



Megaron reconstruction. Palace at Pylos. 1300-1200 BCE

Palace and southern part of the citadel.

Plan. Tiryns, Greece, ca. 1400–1200 BCE.



Comparison: Palace at Knossos.

Plan. (Crete), Greece, ca. 1700–1400 BCE

Aerial view of Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1300–1250 BCE.





Lion Gate, Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1300–1250 BCE.
Limestone, relief panel approx. 9' 6" high.

Lion Gate. Detail





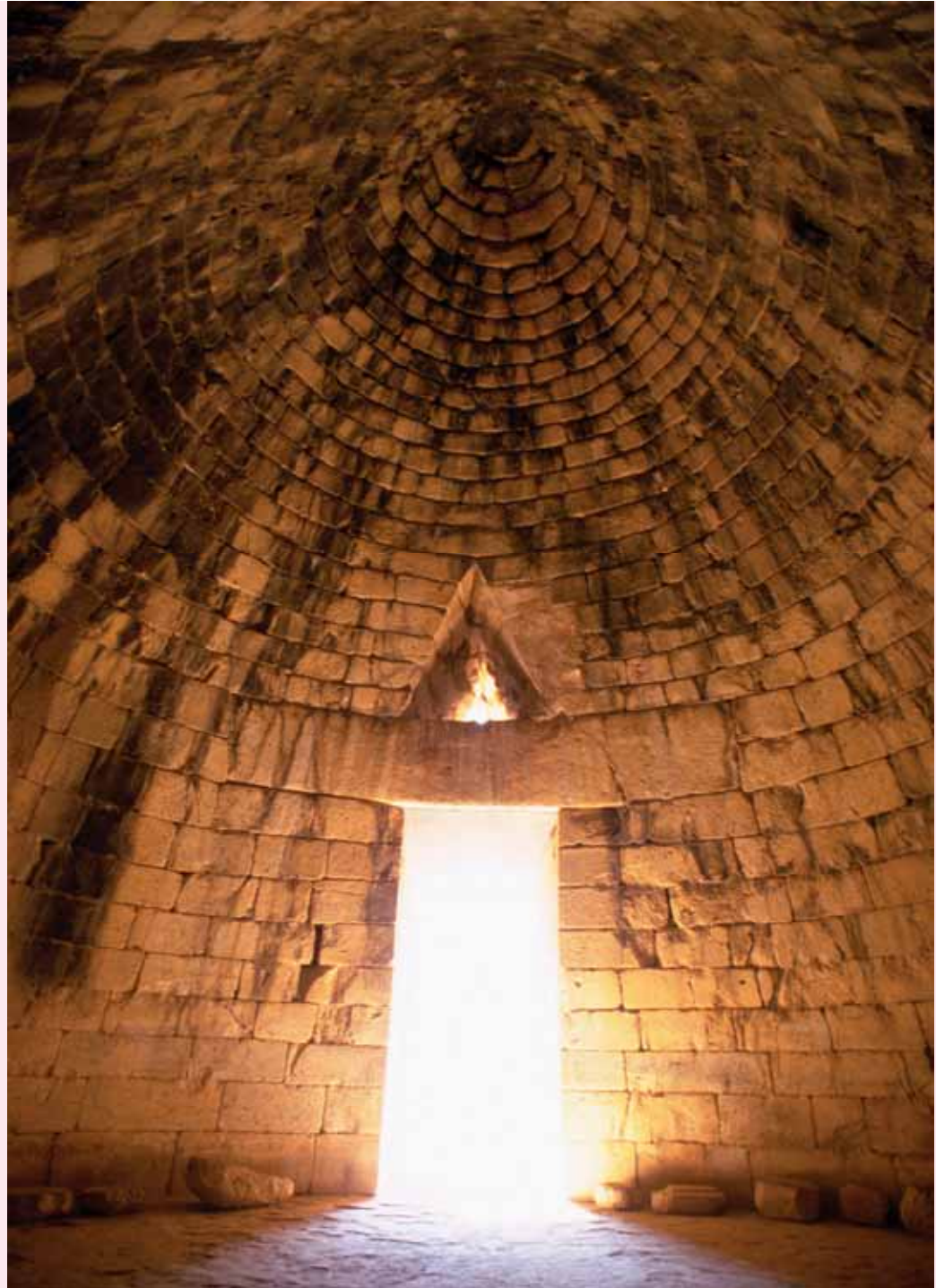
Comparison: Lion Gate, Boghazköy, Turkey, ca. 1400 BCE. Limestone, lions approx. 7' high.

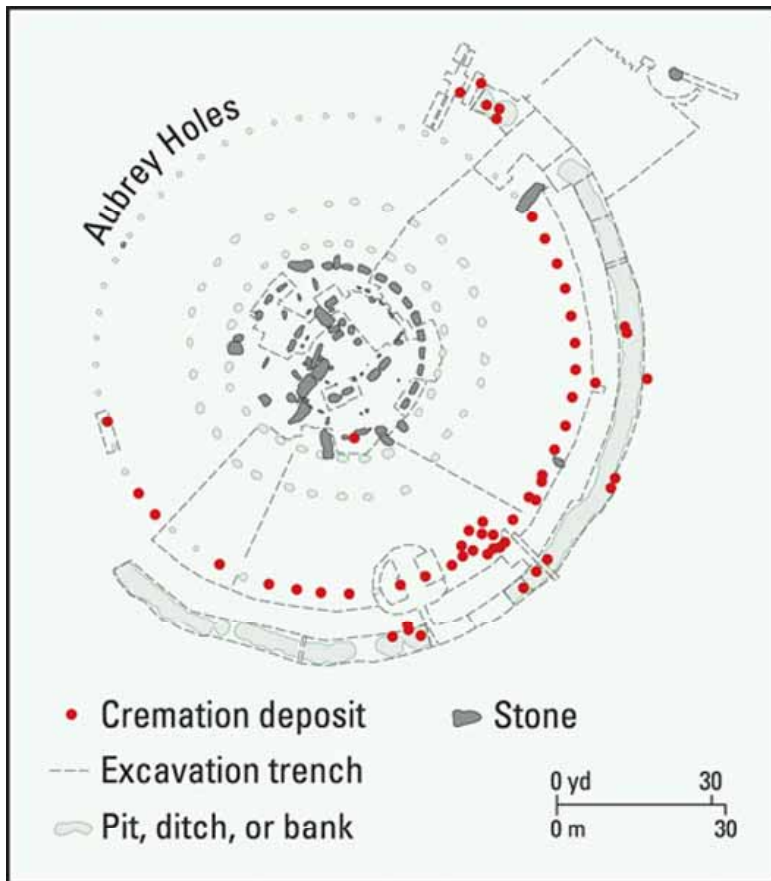


Treasury of Atreus, Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1300–1250 BCE.

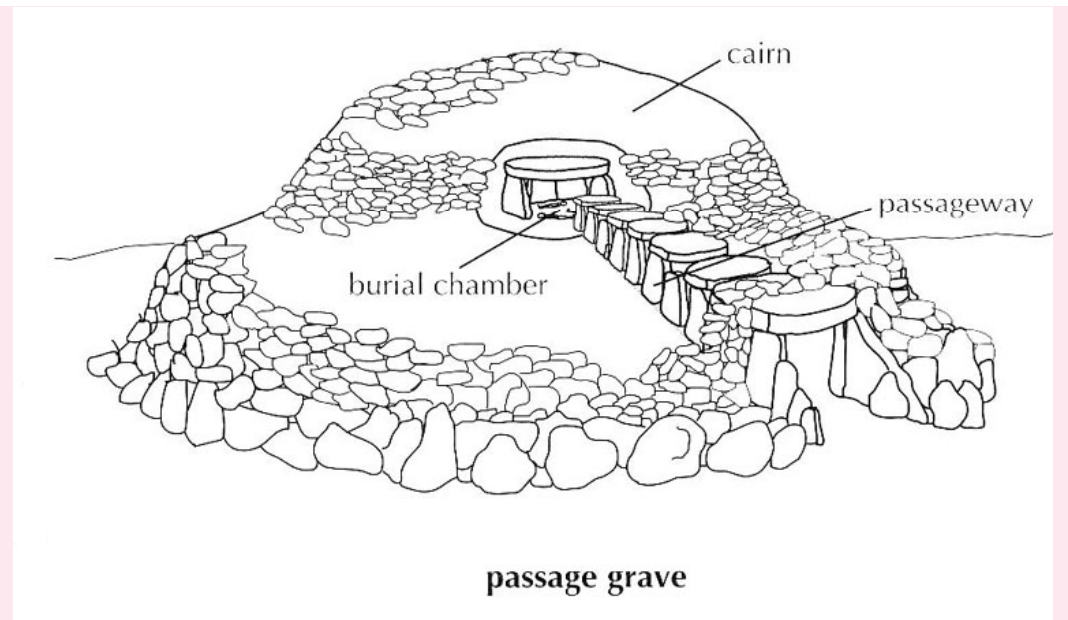
Tholos tomb: A beehive shaped tomb with a circular plan

Treasury of Atreus, Vault of the tholos Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1300–1250 BCE. Approx. 43' high.



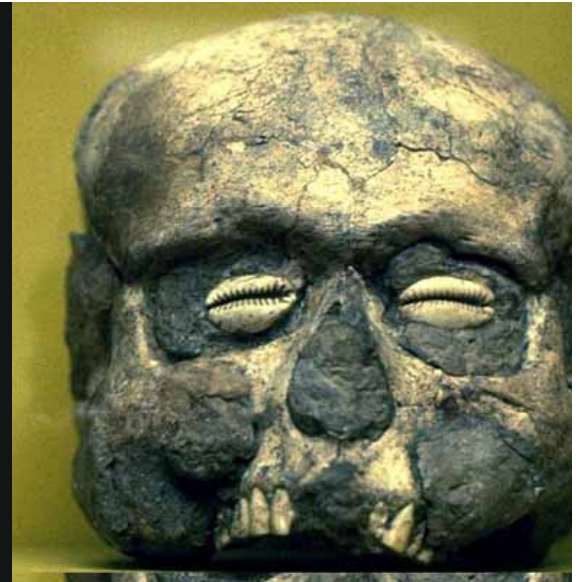


Comparison: Neolithic. Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, England, ca. 2550–1600 BCE. Circle is 97' in diameter; approx. 24' high.



Comparison: Neolithic Passage Grave. Loughcrew, Ireland. c. 3300 BCE





**Comparison: Skull
from Jericho.**

7000-6000 BCE

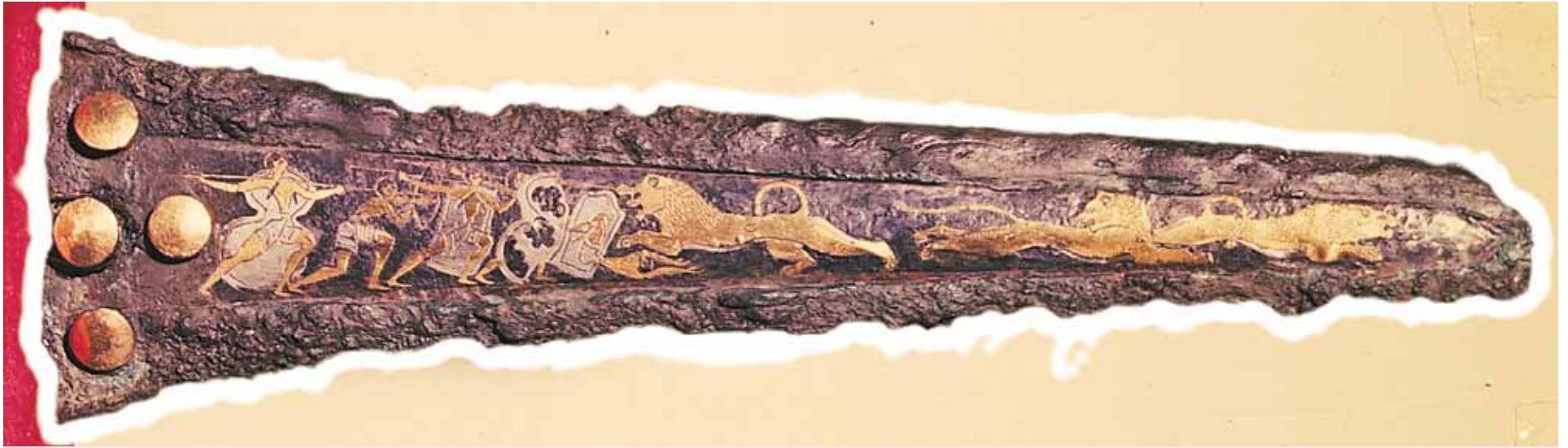
Funerary mask, from Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1600–1500 BCE.
Beaten gold, approx. 1' high. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Funerary mask, from Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1600–1500 BCE.
Beaten gold, approx. 1' high. National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Comparison: Death mask of Tutankhamen, from the innermost coffin in his tomb at Thebes, Egypt, ca. 1323 BCE.
24 pounds of solid gold, inlaid lapis lazuli, carnelian, quartz, turquoise, obsidian, and colored glass.



Inlaid dagger blade with lion hunt, from Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1600–1500 BCE.
Bronze, inlaid with gold, silver, and niello, approx. 9" long.
National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Warrior Vase, from Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1200 BCE. Approx. 1' 4" high
National Archaeological Museum, Athens.



Warrior Vase, from Mycenae, Greece, ca. 1200 BCE. Approx. 1' 4" high National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

Comparison: Harvester Vase, from Hagia Triada (Crete), Greece, ca. 1500 BCE. Steatite, greatest diameter approx. 5". Archaeological Museum, Herakleion.



1250-1200 - Collapse of the Mycenaean Culture

1200-900 - Dark Ages