

UCL INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

**ARCL0135:
Aegean Prehistory: major themes and current debates**

2023-24: Term II

MA Option Module (15 credits)

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ASSESSMENTS:

The **coursework coversheet** is available on the course Moodle pages and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under "Policies, Forms and Guidelines".

Please enter **your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and *in the subject line*** when you upload your work in Moodle.

Please use **your five-digit candidate code as the name of the file** you submit.

Please refer to <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-study-skills-guide/referencing-effectively-and-ioa-guidelines>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity>

<https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI>

for instructions on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties for late submission, over-length work, the use of text generation software (AI) and academic misconduct.

1. MODULE OVERVIEW

Module description

This module provides selective thematic coverage of the Bronze Age Aegean, c. 3000-1100 BCE, with a focus on the southern Aegean, and consideration of its Mediterranean context. Drawing on the region's exceptional wealth of archaeological data, and set within a theoretically informed, problem-oriented framework, the module explores alternative perspectives and aims to introduce students to current interpretations, debates and avenues for future research. It locates prehistoric Aegean societies relative to contemporary Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies, exploring links between traditionally separate fields. Themes of recurrent importance include social, political and economic structures, the significance of material culture, local and longer-range interaction, and the integration of textual evidence (where available) with material data.

This handbook contains basic information about the content and administration of this module. Further details are provided on the module Moodle: <<https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=37655>>.

Further important information relating to all modules at the Institute of Archaeology is to be found on the IOA website, in the general MA/MSc handbook, and in your degree handbook.

Module Aims

- To provide an advanced, broadly based introduction to the archaeology of the Bronze Age Aegean.
- To encourage the critical evaluation of current research (problems, methods and theory, the quality of evidence, approaches to analyses and substantive results).
- To familiarise students with major elements and examples of Aegean material culture relevant to the period, and analytical and interpretive approaches to them.
- To introduce students to important current research projects.
- To prepare students to undertake original research in Aegean prehistoric archaeology.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module a student should:

- Have a solid overview of major developments and interpretive perspectives in Aegean prehistory, with greater in-depth knowledge of topics on which coursework has been written, and a general understanding of how the Aegean region fits into a wider Mediterranean and European context.
- Understand the main interpretive paradigms that have dominated the field, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, enabling critical assessment of the structure, rationale and contributions of arguments and interpretations in the literature.
- Recognise a broad range of the material culture from the period, and understand its cultural significance as well as its interpretive potential.
- Be able to explore data from the prehistoric Aegean using a wide range of theoretical approaches current in archaeology.

Methods of Assessment

This module is assessed by a total of 3,000 words of coursework. This is divided into (i) a 1,000-word written version of an oral presentation on an object from the British Museum collections (contributing 30% of the module mark), and (ii) a 2,000-word essay (contributing 70% of the module mark).

Communications

- **The module Moodle is the main hub** for information and resources for this module.
- Important information will be communicated by e-mail by the Module Co-ordinator.
- Please send any general queries relating to module content, assessments and administration to the Module Co-ordinator by e-mail.
- For personal queries, please also contact the Co-ordinator by e-mail.

Week-by-week summary

Week	Date	Topic
1	12 Jan.	Introduction: module management; changing perspectives in Aegean Prehistory; the Aegean region, ecology and Bronze Age dynamics.
2	19 Jan.	Contrasting Early Bronze Age developments: the southern mainland, western Anatolia and the Cyclades.
3	26 Jan.	Early Bronze Age Crete and the development of the Minoan palace-states.
4	2 Feb.	Protopalatial Crete: palaces, shrines, polities and palatial societies.
5	9 Feb.	Neopalatial Crete: society, economy, ideology and political dynamics.
6	READING WEEK (no seminar; BM artefact sessions Tuesday or Wednesday and presentations Friday)	
7	23 Feb.	Minoanisation and the southern Aegean.
8	1 Mar.	Transformations of Cretan polities in the later Bronze Age.
9	8 Mar.	Development, social formations and dynamics in Mycenaean polities.
10	15 Mar.	The Aegean within the wider Mediterranean: changing relationships.
11	22 Mar.	The collapse of Aegean polities and the end of the Bronze Age.

Weekly Module Plan

The module is taught through recorded lectures and on-line seminars. Students are expected to undertake set readings and view recorded lectures before the seminars to be able fully to follow and actively participate in the discussion. They are invited to post questions and comments on the Moodle Discussion Board to help inform the seminar discussions. Recorded lectures, Reading Guidance and the Discussion Board for the following week will normally be accessible on the module Moodle at least a week ahead of the relevant session.

Workload

This is a 15-credit module which equates to 150 hours of learning time including session preparation, background reading, and researching and writing your assignments.

There will be 20 hours of seminars for this module. Up to 2 hours of recorded lectures will be available each week as background information, ideally to be watched prior to (and serve as background to) each seminar. Students will be expected to undertake around 60 hours of reading for the module, plus 50 hours preparing for and producing the assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of some 150 hours for the module.

With this in mind, you should expect to organise your time in roughly this way:

20 hours	Staff-led teaching sessions: in-person seminars.
80 hours	Self-guided session preparation (reading, recorded lectures), about 8 hours a week.
15 hours	Reading for, and writing essay 1.
35 hours	Reading for, and writing essay 2.

Prerequisites

This module does not have a formal prerequisite. However, students will ideally have some familiarity with Aegean prehistory through previous study, to ensure that they have the background to get the most out of the Masters level seminars. The recorded lectures are provided to help with such background. There is no good textbook that covers the material for this module, but anyone wanting to brush-up could usefully consult the on-line resource produced by Jerry Rutter at Dartmouth College <<https://sites.dartmouth.edu/aegean-prehistory/>> (texts last revised c. 2011-13; it also has extensive bibliographies by topic, some revised up to 2021).

2. ASSESSMENT

Submission deadlines:

Essay 1: Thursday 29 February; 1,000 words (30% of final mark).

Essay 2: Thursday 2 May; 2,000 words (70% of final mark).

Assessment 1: The first, short essay (1,000 words), will be a written version of an oral presentation to the class on an object selected by each student (subject to approval) from the British Museum collections. This will involve an individual study session on Tuesday or Wednesday in Reading Week (13 or 14 February: 10:30-13:00), and a group presentation session at the British Museum on Friday that same week (16 February: 10-13:00).

Assessment 2: The second, longer essay (2,000 words), should engage with a substantive issue in Aegean prehistory.

Topics and specific titles for the essays are defined by each student to suit their individual interests, in consultation with (and with the approval of) the Module Co-ordinator, who will give guidance to ensure that the question is answerable, that it is neither too narrow nor too broad, and that it is being approached in an effective way. He can also advise on relevant readings from the seminar lists, plus additional reading that may be appropriate.

Each assignment and possible approaches to it will be discussed in advance of the submission deadline. Specific guidelines for writing essays for this course are available on the module Moodle in the Assessments section. If you are unclear about the nature of an assignment, you should discuss this with the Module Co-ordinator.

The Module Co-ordinator will be happy to discuss an outline of your approach to an assessment, provided this is planned suitably in advance of the submission date; he is not allowed to read full drafts of your essays prior to submission. You will receive feedback on your written coursework via Moodle, and have the opportunity to discuss your marks and feedback with the Co-ordinator.

For more details see the 'Assessment' section on the module Moodle. The coursework coversheet is available on the module Moodle and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under "Policies, Forms and Guidelines".

Please make sure you enter your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and in the subject line when you upload your work in Moodle. Please use your five-digit candidate code in the name of the file you submit – e.g. ARCL0133-Essay1/2-CODE.

Information on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties are available in the IoA Student Handbook:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook>.

The [IoA marking criteria](#) can be found in the IoA Student Handbook (Section 13: Information on assessment). The [IoA Study Skills Guide](#) provides useful guidance on writing different types of assignment.

Please note that **late submission, exceeding the maximum word count and academic misconduct (unacknowledged use of text generation software and plagiarism)** will be penalized and can significantly reduce the mark awarded for the assignment and/or overall module result. Please do consult

- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment> with sections 13.7–13.8: coursework submission, 13.10: word count, 13.12–14: academic integrity
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity> for UCL's guidance on academic integrity
- <https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI> for UCL's guidance on how to acknowledge the use of text generation software.

The **use of software to generate research and content is not allowed for marked assessments for this course** and will be penalised; the use of software for language and writing review and improvement is permitted, and the software and the way it has been used must be indicated in the relevant boxes on the coursework coversheet. UCL defines language and writing review as checking "areas of academic writing such as structure, fluency, presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and language translation".

3. RESOURCES AND PREPARATIONS FOR CLASS

Preparation for class

You are expected to **read most of the essential readings** (five-six recommended). Readings are listed in the order that it is recommended you read them, to make most sense. A brief comment and prioritisation of the essential readings is available on the module Moodle, particularly to guide those who may be very constrained for time in a specific week. Various recorded lectures will be available on the module Moodle for each weekly session. There will be several 20-30 minute recorded lectures on specific chronological or thematic topics, relevant to each week's subject. They are numbered sequentially in a recommended viewing order, but you can watch or skip these, to the degree that you already have this background from previous courses, and to the degree that the individual topics are of interest to you. The seminars will not repeat this material, but build on the recorded lectures as background, drawing on material from the different presentations, to consider problems and questions for discussion, and draw on the readings, as appropriate.

There will be a weekly Discussion Board on the module Moodle, to which you can post questions and respond to others' questions or comments, which will be reviewed by the Module Co-ordinator and help to inform what is addressed in the seminar. Watching the lectures and completing the readings is essential for your effective participation in discussions, and will greatly enhance your understanding of the material covered. A list of further Recommended readings by session is provided on the module Moodle, for you to get a sense of the range of work on a given topic and for you to draw upon for your assessments.

Classes

The module is taught as a series of 10 weekly 2-hour seminars, to discuss and debate the broad subjects defined for that week. Seminars have weekly required readings, which students **will be expected to have read** to be able fully to follow and actively to contribute to the discussion. Up to 2-hours of optional but recommended recorded lectures are provided on the module Moodle as background for each week's topic. These will be of particular value to students who have not previously attended an intensive course in Aegean prehistory.

Seminars will be held in the Institute of Archaeology building in room 410 on Fridays at 11:00-13:00.

Recommended basic texts and on-line resources

- Bintliff, J. 2012. *The Complete Archaeology of Greece. From hunter-gatherers to the 20th century A.D.* Oxford. [INST ARCH DAE 100 BIN; available On-line via Explore]
- Broodbank, C. 2013. *The Making of the Middle Sea.* London. [INST ARCH DAG 100 BRO; On-line]
- Warren, P. 1989. *The Aegean Civilisations* (revised edition; short book-length introduction). [INST ARCH DAG 10 Qto WAR; YATES Qto A 22 WAR]
- Dickinson, O. 1994. *The Aegean Bronze Age* (long the standard textbook, organised by themes rather than periods). [IOA Issue Desk DIC; INST ARCH DAE 100 DIC]
- Dickinson, O. 2006. *The Aegean from Bronze Age to Iron Age: continuity and change between the twelfth and eighth centuries BC.* [INST ARCH DAG 100 DIC]
- Runnels, C. and P. Murray. 2001. *Greece Before History: An Archaeological Companion and Guide.* [INST ARCH DAE 100 RUN]
- Fitton, J.L. 2002. *Minoans.* London. [INST ARCH DAG 14 FIT]
- Watrous, L.V. 2021. *Minoan Crete. An Introduction.* Cambridge. [On-line]
- Adams, E. 2017. *Cultural Identity in Minoan Crete: Social dynamics in the Neopalatial period.* Cambridge. [INST ARCH DAG 14 ADA; On-line]
- Schofield, L. 2007. *The Mycenaeans.* London. [IOA DAE 100 SCH]
- Berg, I. 2019. *The Cycladic and Aegean Islands in Prehistory.* Abingdon. [INST ARCH DAG 10 BER]
- Cline, E. (ed.). 2010. *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean (ca. 3000-1000 BC).* Oxford. [INST ARCH DAG 100 CLI; On-line]
- Shelmerdine, C. (ed.). 2008. *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age.* Cambridge. [INST ARCH DAG 100 SHE; On-line]
- Poursat, J.-C. 2022. *The Art and Archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age.* Cambridge. [On-line]

Also see Jeremy Rutter's on-line resource at Dartmouth College <<https://sites.dartmouth.edu/aegean-prehistory/>>

4. SYLLABUS

The *Essential* readings are those necessary to keep up with the topics covered in the module sessions, and ***it is expected that students will have read these prior to the seminar***. Readings are prioritised in the order that it is recommended you read them, to make most sense. A very brief comment and prioritisation of the essential readings is posted on the module Moodle, particularly to guide those who may be very constrained for time in a specific week. Individual articles and book chapters identified as Essential readings are available from on-line journals, or held on-line. For recent publications among the Recommended readings, if they are not in journals or volumes available on-line, it is worth looking by author on the www.academia.edu and www.researchgate.net sites, where researchers increasingly make pdfs of their papers available to the public. Some may also be available on other academic deposit web-sites and have links if you search for the author and title on <http://scholar.google.com>.

Week 1. 12 January: Introduction: module management; changing perspectives in Aegean Prehistory, the Aegean region, ecology, and Bronze Age dynamics.

Practical details of the course will be reviewed in a recorded Introduction, with recorded modular lectures introducing substantive background information about the Aegean, to be drawn on in later seminar discussions.

The session will briefly outline the aims of the module, its organisation, supplementary teaching resources and assessments. The remainder of the session will review fundamentals, such as the kinds of data available, chronological frameworks, interpretive approaches and the changing relationships of Aegean prehistory with other sub-fields of study.

The traditional diffusionary models which assumed East Mediterranean inspiration for cultural developments in the Aegean, were effectively challenged by Renfrew's systemic Processual model presented in his '*The Emergence of Civilisation*' in 1972. This advocated largely endogenous developments within the Aegean, and set the framework for subsequent research attempting to explain, rather than simply describe the Aegean archaeological evidence. This local, systemic and adaptive perspective emphasised characteristics of the Aegean environment, though these do not differ from many other Mediterranean contexts. A more balanced perspective followed explorations of World Systems models, increasingly considering local differentiation in available resources integrated through maritime connectivity. Most interpretive models for social change are largely within a broadly Processual framework, though increasingly explicitly considering individual agency and elements of more Post-processual perspectives, such as ideology and power structures. But running alongside this, the bulk of research is still fairly traditional in orientation, and has little recognised or explicit theoretical grounding. The seminar will focus on the major interpretive frameworks relevant in the local Aegean contexts and broad approaches to cultural dynamics, considering multi-scalar processes and interactions.

Themes: approaches, geographical and intellectual links; Classical traditions and proto-history; European nationalism and Orientalism; romanticism vs explanation; diffusion vs local development; ecological variability and complementarity; interaction and exchange; gradual vs rapid change.

Essential reading:

Schoep, I. 2018. Building the Labyrinth: Arthur Evans and the Construction of Minoan Civilization. *AJA* 122:5-32. [IOA Pers; On-line] Considers aspects of the intellectual context of the early construction of Aegean Prehistory through the focus of Evans' excavations at Knossos and writings on the Minoans. Many of these fundamental concepts are still implicit in much Aegean prehistory, though not recognised as having their origins in late 19th century assumptions about culture and society.

Renfrew, C. 2011. Preface and Introduction (2010). In C. Renfrew. *The Emergence of Civilisation: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium BC*. (2nd edition). Oxford:xxvii-xxli. [INST ARCH DAG 100 REN; On-line] In reaction to traditional diffusionary approaches, Renfrew stresses the cultural and developmental autonomy of Aegean civilisation, using a systems approach to explain the rise of palace societies as an endogenous process. Retrospectives (including by Renfrew) can be found in J. Barrett and P. Halstead (eds)

2004, *The Emergence of Civilisation Revisited*. Here, Renfrew retrospectively discusses what he wanted to achieve and feels he accomplished.

Hamilakis, Y. 2002. What future for the 'Minoan' past? Rethinking Minoan archaeology. In Y. Hamilakis (ed.). *Labyrinth Revisited. Rethinking 'Minoan' archaeology*. Oxford:2-28. [INST ARCH DAG 14 HAM] Draws on a range of Post-processual perspectives for the study of Aegean prehistory, its role in the present, and the agendas of modern archaeologists. These have served more as challenges, than worked-through strategies, since there is no over-arching integrated perspective.

Parkinson, W. and M. Galaty. 2007. Secondary states in perspective: an integrated approach to state formation in the Prehistoric Aegean. *American Anthropologist* 109(1):113-129. [On-line] I include this as sketching a broad framework of Aegean prehistory, that also characterises the perspective of much of the current Processually informed research.

Broodbank, C. 2014. Mediterranean prehistory. In P. Horden and S. Kinoshita (eds). *A Companion to Mediterranean History*. Chichester:45-58. [INST ARCL DAG 100 HOR; On-line] Contextualises the prehistoric Aegean within its Mediterranean context in terms of broad ecological dynamics, varying social and cultural developments in different regions of the Mediterranean, and specific interactions of Aegean societies with neighbouring and more distant cultures.

Additional background on Aegean space and time:

Manning, S. 2010. Chronology and terminology. In E. Cline (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Aegean Bronze Age (ca. 3000-1000 BC)*. Oxford:11-28. [INST ARCH DAG 100 CLI; On-line] Provides an overview of chronological schemes, their development, and terms.

Bintliff, J. 2020. Natural and human ecology: geography, climate, and demography. In E. Lemos and A. Kotsonas (eds), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*. Oxford:3-32. [On-line] Provides a summary of Aegean ecologies and their long-term impacts on human societies in the region.

Week 2. 19 January: Contrasting Early Bronze Age developments: the southern mainland, western Anatolia and the Cyclades.

The Early Bronze Age, roughly the 3rd millennium BCE, saw widespread changes in Aegean societies and economies, and increasing differentiation both within and between communities. These are commonly seen as an essential back-drop to the emergence of the first palatial societies in the 2nd millennium BCE in Crete, though exactly how and through what processes remains intensely debated.

The general picture of EBA 'proto-urban societies' in the Aegean was constructed by Renfrew by drawing on different categories of evidence from across the entire region. Despite 50 years of subsequent research, the different regions of the Aegean have steadfastly resisted conforming to such a homogenised pattern. This seminar and the next will try to identify similarities and differences, while aiming to define the nature of societies in different parts of the broader region. The readings provide an overview of various arguments currently being discussed for the southern Mainland, West Anatolia and the Cyclades. The different broad characteristics of each region, in terms of landscapes and connectivity, provide variable contexts for the development of the small-scale, post-Neolithic settlement systems. This session also provides a background for considering, in the following seminar, in what ways cultural developments on Crete were similar or different, and how and why at least some communities there developed differently from the end of the third millennium.

Themes: distinctions from Neolithic; demography; centralisation and scale; metals, exchange and craft specialisation; proto-urban communities; intra- and inter-community differentiation; social differentiation and emerging elites; centralisation and redistributive economies; feasting; competition and fortification; what collapsed and why.

Essential reading:

Renfrew, C. 1972 (2011). Chapter 21. The multiplier effect in action. In C. Renfrew, *The Emergence of Civilisation*. London:476-504. [INST ARCH DAG 100 REN; Yates A 22 REN; On-line]

Pullen, D. 2008. The Early Bronze Age in Greece. In C. Shelmerdine (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge:19-46. [On-line]

- Broodbank, C. 2008. The Early Bronze Age in the Cyclades. In C. Shelmerdine (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge:47-76. [On-line]
- Sahoglu, V. 2005. The Anatolian trade network and the Izmir region during the Early Bronze Age. *OJA* 24:339-61. [IoA Pers; On-line]
- Broodbank, C. 2013. Ch. 7: The devil and the deep blue sea. In C. Broodbank, *The Making of the Middle Sea*. London: Thames and Hudson: especially pp. 304-44. [INST ARCH DAG 100 BRO; On-line]
- Weiberg, E. and M. Finné. 2013. Mind or matter? People-environment interactions and the demise of Early Helladic II society in the northeastern Peloponnese. *AJA* 117.1:1-31. [IoA Pers; On-line]

Week 3. 26 January: Early Bronze Age Crete and the development of the Minoan states.

This topic is central to understanding the Aegean Bronze Age. Building on the earlier reviews of paradigms and EBA societies elsewhere in the Aegean, we now focus on the evidence for the EBA in Crete and the development of the Cretan palace-centred states. Previously neglected, the late Prepalatial period has received increasing attention in recent years, both theoretically and in terms of fieldwork, starting to sketch quite diverse developments across the island. Key issues for defining and interpreting these changes are the importance of endogenous versus exogenous factors, the time-scale of change (evolutionary or revolutionary), local variations, and the social processes that led to the increasingly integrated social, economic and political structures represented by the emerging, palace-centred polities in some regions in Crete.

Themes: in what ways and why was development on Crete different – description vs explanation; distinctions from the rest of the southern Aegean; intra-island variability; urbanisation, its characteristics and implications; intra- and extra-regional exchange; community and emerging elites; the pace of change: evolution or revolution.

Essential reading:

- Cherry, J. 1984. The emergence of the state in the prehistoric Aegean. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 30:18-48. [Main CLASSICS Pers; On-line]
- Whitelaw, T. 2004. Alternative pathways to complexity in the southern Aegean. In J. Barrett and P. Halstead (eds), *The Emergence of Civilisation Revisited*. Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology. Oxford:232-56. [INST ARCH DAG 100 BAR; available On-line on Whitelaw's www.Academia.edu page]
- Legarra Herrero, B. 2016. Primary state formation processes on Bronze Age Crete: a social approach to change in early complex societies. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26:349-67. [IoA PERS; On-line]
- Manning, S. 2018. The development of complex society on Crete: the balance between wider context and local agency. In A. Knodell and T. Leppard (eds), *Regional approaches to society and complexity: studies in honor of John F. Cherry*. Sheffield:29-58. [INST ARCH DAG 100 KNO; available On-line on Manning's www.Academia.edu page]
- Tomkins, P. 2018. Inspecting the foundations: The Early Minoan project in review. In M. Relaki and Y. Papadatos (eds), *From the Foundations to the Legacy of Minoan Archaeology: Studies in honour of Professor Keith Branigan*. Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology 12. Oxford:36-67. [INST ARCH DAG 14 BRA; On-line]

Week 4. 2 February: Protopalatial Crete: palaces, shrines, polities and palatial societies.

Traditionally divided into two major phases, Protopalatial and Neopalatial, recent discoveries and re-assessments are starting to sketch a far more varied, dynamic and unstable development of Cretan societies, with polities of various scales and degrees of centralisation and integration across the island, with some areas outside palatial control through at least most of the Middle Bronze Age. At present, it is still pragmatic to divide this phase into the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods, though they now seem to have little island-wide significance except in chronological terms. Our picture of Minoan culture has long been dominated by evidence from early extensive excavations at late Neopalatial sites, but we are beginning to recognise that Protopalatial societies are not just an early but less well documented manifestation of the later Neopalatial culture. That said, our understanding of the Protopalatial period, comprising the core of the Middle Bronze Age, remains severely limited by overlying Neopalatial remains at many sites, so our picture of societies at this

time is patchy. But palaces, shrines, and evidence that helps us define the earliest polities, provide an outline of these early states, which is considered in this session.

Themes: periodisation and variation: static vs dynamic perspectives and archaeological resolution; what is a palace; urbanism, intra- and inter-community transformation and differentiation; hierarchy or heterarchy; developing regional integration and differentiation; changes in burial behaviour and societal relations; non-palatial landscapes; extra-mural sanctuaries.

Essential reading:

- Cherry, J. 1986. Politics and palaces: some problems in Minoan state formation. In C. Renfrew and J. Cherry (eds), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*. Cambridge:19-45. [INST ARCH BD REN]
- Whitelaw, T. 2018. Recognising polities in prehistoric Crete. In M. Relaki and Y. Papadatos (eds), *From the Foundations to the Legacy of Minoan Archaeology: Studies in honour of Professor Keith Branigan*. Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology 12. Oxford:210-55. [INST ARCH DAG 14 BRA; On-line]
- Schoep, I. 2010. The Minoan 'palace-temple' reconsidered: a critical assessment of the spatial concentration of political, religious and economic power in Bronze Age Crete. *JMA* 23:219-43. [IoA Pers; On-line]
- Schoep, I. 2010. Making elites: political economy and elite culture(s) in Middle Minoan Crete. In D. Pullen (ed.), *Political Economies of the Aegean Bronze Age*. Oxford:66-85. [INST ARCH DAG PUL; On-line]
- Peatfield, A. 1990. Minoan peak sanctuaries: history and society. *Opuscula Athenensia* 18:117-132. [Available On-line on Peatfield's www.Academia.edu page]

Week 5. 9 February: Neopalatial Crete: society, economy, ideology and political dynamics.

The Neopalatial period has been the most intensively investigated period in prehistoric Crete, preserves the widest range of Minoan material culture, and therefore provides our most complete picture of palatial Minoan society. But recent work is demonstrating this was a long and very dynamic phase, despite most of our evidence coming from near the end of the period, in LM IB destruction levels. It witnessed a tremendous development of representational art in a wide range of media, which very much frames our interpretation of elite Minoan culture. Usually assessed aesthetically and interpreted within a framework of uncritical ethnocentric assumptions going back to Evans, we will consider the major types of sites and various categories of material evidence available, and consider how we can use the archaeological remains of domestic, elite and cult contexts to explore identity construction, performance and ritual behaviour, and their role in the negotiation and exercise of social and political power in palatial Crete. Together, this evidence is allowing us to construct a much more dynamic picture of this major phase in palatial societies on Crete.

Themes: political integration or cultural emulation; material culture change, economics, ideology and politics; Knossian cultural hegemony or political expansion; regional economic and political structure; political variation and dynamics; material elaboration; ceremonial elaboration and social/political integration.

Essential reading:

- Adams, E. 2017. Palaces and the context. In E. Adams, *Cultural Identity in Minoan Crete: Social dynamics in the Neopalatial period*. Cambridge:70-107. [INST ARCH DAG 14 ADA; On-line]
- Adams, E. 2017. Other settlements and regional groupings. In E. Adams, *Cultural Identity in Minoan Crete: Social dynamics in the Neopalatial period*. Cambridge:108-141. [INST ARCH DAG 14 ADA; On-line]
- Schoep, I. 1999. Tablets and territories? Reconstructing Late Minoan IB political geography through undeciphered documents. *AJA* 103:201-21. [IoA Pers; On-line]
- Whitelaw, T. 2019. Feeding Knossos: exploring economic and logistical implications of urbanism on Prehistoric Crete. In D. Garcia, R Orgeolet, M. Pomadère and J. Zurbach (eds), *Country in the City. Agricultural Functions in Protohistoric Urban Settlements (Aegean and Western Mediterranean)*. Oxford:88-121.
- Wiener, M. 2007. Neopalatial Knossos: rule and role. In P. Betancourt, M. Nelson and H. Williams (eds), *Krinoi kai Limenes. Studies in Honor of Joseph and Maria Shaw*. Philadelphia:231-42. [INST ARCH DAE 100 BET; On-line]
- Cain, C. 2001 Dancing in the dark: deconstructing a narrative of epiphany on the Isopata Ring. *AJA* 105(1):27-49.

Week 6. Reading Week. No seminar.

British Museum artefact studies:

Individual handling session to examine your artefact: either Tuesday (13th Feb. 10:30-13:00) or Wednesday (14th Feb. 10:30-13:00).

Group presentations (all present): Friday (16th Feb. 10:00-13:00).

Week 7. 23 February: 'Minoanisation' and the southern Aegean.

In addition to close trading connections, marked Cretan influence is seen, particularly during the Neopalatial period, on a range of technological and material culture traits in southern Aegean island and coastal southern mainland Greek and Anatolian communities. This process of 'Minoanisation' has been traditionally interpreted as the 'thalassocracy of Minos' mentioned in later Greek traditions, representing political domination from Crete, often involving some actual colonisation from Crete. While still argued, recent research has revealed considerable variability in the phenomenon, and the selective adoption of Cretan practices, techniques and styles by different communities. This has shifted the emphasis toward acculturation, hybridisation and post-colonial perspectives that attach more significance to the agency of local communities in selectively adopting and adapting different Minoan behaviours and practices. In addition to the long-explored Cycladic examples, more evidence is emerging from the eastern Aegean as well as Kythera and the southern Greek mainland. While usually considered separately, the rapid transformation of some mainland communities at the end of the MBA and early LBA, can usefully be considered as part of this variable process across the region. This session explores the diversity of the patterns and variety of explanatory models, including colonisation, world systems, post-colonial and network perspectives, that, along with recognition of the processes involved in technological transfers and identity construction, are increasingly considering the transformations from the perspectives of the recipient communities, rather than as a process driven by dominant Cretan agents.

Themes: the Minoan Thalassocracy expectations; models for Minoanisation: conquest, colonisation, commerce and competition; variable adoption and adaptation of Cretan material behaviours; post-colonial perspectives, variable engagement and resistance; contrasts between the islands and southern Greek mainland in patterns and processes.

Essential reading:

- Broodbank, C. 2004. Minoanisation. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 50:46-91. [Main: CLASSICS Pers; On-line].
- Davis, J. and E. Gorogianni 2008. Potsherds from the edge: the construction of identities and the limits of Minoanized areas of the Aegean. In N. Brodie et al. (eds), *Horizon*. Cambridge:339-48. [INST ARCH DAG 10 BRO; available On-line on Gorogianni's www.Academia.edu page]
- Maran, J. 2011. Lost in translation: the Early Mycenaean culture as a phenomenon of glocalization. In T. Wilkinson, S. Sherratt and J. Bennet (eds), *Interweaving worlds: systemic interactions in Eurasia, 7th to 1st millennia BC*. Oxford:282-94. [INST ARCH DA 150 WIL; On-line]
- Knappett, C. 2018. From network connectivity to human mobility: models for Minoanization. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 25(4):974-95. [IOA Pers; On-line]
- Wiener, M. 2013. Realities of power: the Minoan thalassocracy in historical perspective. In R. Koehl (ed.), *Amilla: the Quest for Excellence: Studies Presented to Guenter Kopcke in Celebration of his 75th Birthday*. Philadelphia:149-73. [INST ARCH DAG 100 KOE; On-line]

Week 8. 1 March: Transformations of Cretan polities in the later Bronze Age.

Continuing to explore a more dynamic and variable picture of Cretan polities, the Protopalatial centres of Knossos, Phaistos and Mallia approximate to the 'peer polity' model of equal, politically independent yet culturally inter-related entities. After the Neopalatial period, in the LM II-III ('Mycenaean' phase) on the island, the Linear B tablets reveal that much of the island was controlled from one centre, Knossos. But opinions are strongly divided about the intervening Neopalatial period, archaeologically the best documented prehistoric phase on Crete. We will consider alternative perspectives, involving analyses of settlement, architecture and material culture in its regional context, as well as the evidence for administrative practices.

The eruption of the volcanic island of Thera (Santorini) in the mid 2nd millennium BCE is linked to two debates in Aegean archaeology. One concerns the association between the eruption and the end of the Neopalatial

polities on Crete (attested by widespread destructions late in LM IB). The other concerns Aegean absolute chronology, for radiocarbon dates and other scientific data attributed to the eruption have been used to argue that traditional chronologies were too late by ca. 100 years. This has important ramifications for rates of cultural change in the Aegean as well as correlations with the east Mediterranean and Europe.

There is an increasing recognition that the widespread destructions on Crete at the end of the Neopalatial period are not so easily attributed to a single horizon, or 'event', as has been assumed for many decades, whether as a delayed consequence of the Theran eruption, island-wide earthquake(s), an invasion from the Mycenaean mainland, or some combination of disasters. The disruptions are beginning to be considered as the consequence of longer-term, emerging social conflicts in increasingly centralised and economically and socially differentiated states, though quite what these stresses were and how they led to the destructions, are hotly debated.

We will also consider the post-LM IB development of societies on Crete, through the LM II-III periods. These have traditionally received far less attention than the Neopalatial period – considered the cultural climax of Minoan culture - but are attracting increasing attention as a distinct development within the Aegean. For the LM II-III A/B period, we have additional insights from the palatial archive at Knossos recorded in Linear B, an archaic form of Greek. These provide an understanding of the administrative structure of the centralised polity that dominated central and western Crete. But this polity collapsed in late LM IIIA or early IIIB, several generations earlier than the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces on the mainland. This developing interest reveals these to be periods of considerable dynamism, with increasingly divergent developments across the island, through to the end of the Bronze Age.

Themes: LM IB: cultural apogee or decline; the Theran eruption and potential consequences; collapse, continuity or transformation; models for collapse: external vs internal processes; increasing inequality and exploitation; limits of centralisation; political restructuring; Minoan vs Mycenaean culture; instability, political collapse and fragmentation; continuous political transformations.

Essential reading:

- Drissen, J. 2019. The Santorini eruption. An archaeological investigation of its distal impacts on Minoan Crete. *Quaternary International* 499:195-204. [On-line]
- Christakis, K. 2008. Chapter 5. Storage and sociopolitical dynamics in LM I state societies. In K. Christakis, *The Politics of Storage: Storage and Sociopolitical Complexity in Neopalatial Crete*. Prehistory Monographs 25. Philadelphia:119-46. [INST ARCH DAG 14 CHR; On-line]
- Wiener, M. 2015. The Mycenaean conquest of Minoan Crete. In C. Macdonald, E. Hatzaki and S. Andreou (eds), *The Great Islands: Studies of Crete and Cyprus presented to Gerald Cadogan*. Athens:131-42. [Available on Wiener's www.academia.edu page]
- Preston, L. 2008. Late Minoan II to IIIB Crete. In C. Shelmerdine (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge:310-26. [INST ARCH DAG 100 SHE; On-line]
- Drissen, J. and C. Langohr. 2007. Rallying 'round a 'Minoan' past: the legitimization of power at Knossos during the Late Bronze Age. In M. Galaty and W. Parkinson (eds), *Rethinking Mycenaean Palaces II*. Los Angeles:178-89. [INST ARCH DAE Qto GAL; On-line]
- Whitelaw, T. 2022. Knossos during LM II-III B: dynamism and development. In A.-L. D'Agata, L. Girella, E. Papadopoulou and D. Aquini (eds), *One State, Many Worlds: Crete in the LM II-III A2 Early Period*. (Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, Supplement 2):35-70. [PDF.]

Week 9. 8 March: Development, social formations and dynamics in Mycenaean polities.

The study of the Mycenaean world has been somewhat limited by the long-standing concentration on excavating palaces and rich burials. Through this focus, the palatial period on the Greek mainland provides rich evidence concerning the power strategies that created and held together the Mycenaean kingdoms. The shifts in emphasis in elaboration in the material record, from communities to elite individuals to institutions, with increasing scale and the establishment of the palaces, forms a background to considerations of burial practices, ideology, power, warfare, and monumental architecture. Recent work is also paying more attention both to communities on the fringes of and between palatial polities, and to the expanding peripheries of the culturally Mycenaean world.

The increasing integration in recent decades of archaeological and textual data to understand Mycenaean palatial administration and economies is transforming our understanding, away from the classic Finley-Renfrew redistributive model, to a more exploitative, mobilising model. This is changing our understanding of the role and significance of the palaces and the elites associated with them, with implications also for the nature and consequences of their collapse. Key questions include the kinds of activities attested in the administrative records, how these were organised, and the nature and scale of the centralised economy that was controlled by the palaces, and that outside the palatial administration.

Our model of the Mycenaean world is based on the archaeology and texts of the core polities of the southern mainland. How did this core Mycenaean palatial world relate to other parts of the Aegean? This involves several different issues. One is the variable 'Mycenaeanisation' of much of the coastal and island Aegean, and the nature of Final Palatial and Post-palatial Crete in and after the period of the Linear B archives (see week 8). Another concerns changing relations with non-palatial societies on the fringes of the major polities, and further afield in the north and west Aegean. Finally, there were differing degrees of interaction and cultural assimilation with Troy, Miletus and other west Anatolian communities, behind which lie distant interactions further east, with the inland Hittite empire.

Themes: the transformation from MH culture; selective and controlled Minoanisation; development of Early Mycenaean elites; mortuary elaboration and performance; palaces and bureaucratisation; similarities and differences among polities and regions; palatial administration; political expansion; the non-palatial Mycenaean world; was there a unified Mycenaean empire; Mycenaeanisation of the coastal Aegean.

Essential reading:

- Shelmerdine, C. and J. Bennet. 2008. Economy and administration. In C. Shelmerdine (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge:289-309. [INST ARCH DAG 100 SHE; On-line]
- Voutsaki, S. 2010. From the kinship economy to the palatial economy: the Argolid in the second millennium BC. In D. Pullen (ed.), *Political Economies of the Aegean Bronze Age*. Oxford:86-111. [INST ARCH DAG PUL; On-line]
- Maran, J. and J. Wright 2020. The rise of the Mycenaean culture, palatial administration and its collapse. In I. Lemos and A. Kotsonas (eds), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*. Hoboken:99-132. [On-line]
- Galanakis, Y. 2021. Ma(r)king Places: The monumental mortuary landscapes of Early Mycenaean Greece. In B. Eder and M. Zavadil (eds), *(Social) Place and Space in Early Mycenaean Greece: International Discussions in Mycenaean Archaeology*. Vienna:595-616.
- Whitelaw, T. In press. The first cities of Europe: Minoan and Mycenaean urbanism. In P. Davies and C. Williamson (eds), *The Cambridge Urban History of Europe, vol 1. The Ancient World*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Feuer, B. 2016. Mycenaeanisation in Thessaly: a study in differential acculturation. In E. Gorogianni, P. Pavúk and L. Girella (eds), *Beyond Thalassocracies: Understanding Processes of Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation in the Aegean*. Oxford:186-201. [INST ARCH DAG 100 Qto GOR; On-line]

Week 10. 15 March: The Aegean within the wider Mediterranean: changing relationships.

Wider Mycenaean interaction in the Mediterranean continues earlier Minoan traditions but also develops in dramatic new ways, in terms of new regions, types of exchange systems, the materials exchanged, and the sheer volume of material traded. The development of Cyprus as an urban society and trading hub reconfigured eastern Mediterranean metal supply mechanisms and trading patterns, and its changing entrepreneurial role had significant effects on Mycenaean trade. For the first time, shipwrecks also provide direct evidence for the mechanisms of transfer. This session will consider the role of trade in Bronze Age palace-centred states, and assess the changing nature and significance of Aegean contacts with the East Mediterranean, from the third millennium through the Minoan to Mycenaean palatial phases. Some attention will also be given to the westward extension of Mycenaean trade into the central Mediterranean.

Themes: changing models: diffusionist, isolationist, world systems and networks; physical and technological constraints; ships and shipwrecks; variable nature of contact and implications; major phases in contact with the eastern Mediterranean and implications; role of metals as key imports; significance to Minoan society;

significance to Mycenaean society; palatial or non-palatial organisation; contact to the West; continuities after palatial collapse.

Essential reading:

- Sherratt, A. and S. Sherratt. 1998. Small worlds: interaction and identity in the ancient Mediterranean. In E. Cline and D. Harris-Cline (eds), *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium*. Aegaeum 18. Liège:329-43. [INST ARCH DAG 100 Qto CLI; Available on Sue Sherratt's www.academia.edu page]
- Sherratt, S. 2017. A globalizing Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean. In T. Hodos (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization*. London:602-17. [On-line]
- Murray, S. 2023. Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age trade in archaeological perspective: A review of interpretative and empirical developments. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 31:395-447. [On-line]
- Legarra Herrero, B. 2011. New kid on the block: the nature of the first systematic contacts between Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean around 2000 BC. In T. Wilkinson, S. Sherratt and J. Bennet (eds), *Interweaving Worlds. Systemic Interactions in Eurasia, 7th to the 1st Millennia BC*. Oxford:266-281.
- Schon, R. 2009. Think locally, act globally: Mycenaean elites and the Late Bronze Age world-system. In W. Parkinson and M. Galaty (eds), *Archaic State Interaction: The Eastern Mediterranean in the Bronze Age*. Santa Fe:213-36. [INST ARCH DAG 100 PAR].
- Feldman, M. 2014. Beyond iconography: meaning-making in Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean visual and material culture. In B. Knapp and P. van Dommelen (eds), *The Cambridge Prehistory of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean*. Cambridge:337-351. [INST ARCH DAG 100 Qto KNA; On-line].

For a broader comparative background:

- Broodbank, C. 2013. Ch. 8: Pomp and circumstance (2200-1300 BC). In C. Broodbank, *The Making of the Middle Sea*. London. [INST ARCH DAG 100 BRO; E-book available On-line via Explore]
- Broodbank, C. 2013. Ch. 9: From sea to shining sea (1300-800 BC). In C. Broodbank, *The Making of the Middle Sea*. London. [INST ARCH DAG 100 BRO; E-book available On-line via Explore]

Week 11. 22 March: The collapse of Aegean polities and the end of the Bronze Age.

The late 13th and 12th centuries BCE saw widespread transformations, in certain cases involving political collapse, across the Aegean and east Mediterranean. The causes for the 'ending' of the Bronze Age, and indeed whether a universal cause should be sought across the entire region, are hotly debated. The collapse of the Mycenaean palatial polities will be considered, within this wider process. As well, recent evaluations of the degree of centralisation of the polities, their relatively narrow economic base, and their situation within a wider non-palatial Mycenaean world, contribute to an on-going re-consideration of the significance of the palatial collapse. New perspectives are also emerging on Early Iron Age societies in the Aegean, and their relation with the preceding BA societies. Also considered, briefly, will be the role within such processes of oral epic and the construction of memories of a heroic past.

Themes: what collapsed; changing perspectives on the implications of palatial organisation for the impacts of collapse; collapse across the Eastern Mediterranean and the search for common causes; climate change; the Sea Peoples; changing trade systems, metal supply and palatial organisation; intra- and inter-polity conflicts; post-palatial society and transformations; the memory and manipulation of the Bronze Age in later epic and society.

Essential Reading:

- Maran, J. 2011. The demise of the Mycenaean palaces: the need for an interpretive reset. In R. Jung and E. Kardamaki (eds), *Synchronizing the Destructions of the Mycenaean Palaces* (Mykenische Studien 36) Vienna:231-253. [On-line]
- Eder, B. and Lemos, I. 2020. From the Collapse of the Mycenaean Palaces to the Emergence of Early Iron Age Communities. In I. Lemos and A. Kotsonas (eds), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*. Hoboken:133-160. [On-line]
- Sherratt, S. 2020. From the Near East to the far West. In I. Lemos and A. Kotsonas (eds), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean*. Hoboken:187-215. [On-line]
- Sherratt, S. 1998. 'Sea peoples' and the economic structure of the late second millennium in the Eastern Mediterranean. In S. Gitin, A. Mazar and E. Stern (eds), *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to*

- Early Tenth Centuries BCE*. Jerusalem:92-313. [IOA Issue Desk GIT; INST ARCH DAG 100 GIT; Available on Sue Sherratt's www.academia.edu page]
- Knapp, B. and S. Manning. 2016. Crisis in context: the end of the Late Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean. *AJA* 120(1):99-149. [IOA Pers; On-line]
- Bennet, J. 1997. Homer and the Bronze Age. In I. Morris and B. Powell (eds), *A New Companion to Homer*. Leiden: Brill:511-34. [Main Short Loan Collection MOR; On-line]